These Sayings of Mine

An Interpretation of the Teachings of Jesus

By LLOYD C. DOUGLAS

Author of "The Minister's Everyday Life"

This strikingly original interpretation of the parables in their bearing upon current problems will make a strong appeal to business and professional men as well as to students in colleges and universities. It will also be valuable to teachers for use as a text-book to stimulate discussion rather than controversy because of its sincere and unique appraisal of Jesus' teachings as viewed in the light of modern thinking and phrased in the language of our contemporaneous life.

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TO MY MOTHER

AT WHOSE KNEE I FIRST HEARD
THESE SAYINGS

FOREWORD

An unusual tide of interest has been flowing, of late, concerning the teachings of Jesus.

Unprecedented problems, arising out of recent startling changes in men's mental habits and ways of living, seem to demand our quest of a more adequate guidance than is offered by the self-confessedly troubled leadership of this generation.

It is not that we lack confidence in the zeal or sincerity of our contemporaneous religious counsellors, for we believe them to be good and thoughtful men, every way entitled to our full respect. Whatever of anxiety has been felt about the clearness of their vision and the authority of their opinions originated with them quite in advance of being entertained by us. Of one thing, however, they are all sure, no matter how uncertain they may be about other things—and upon this one thing they are all agreed, no matter how widely separated they may be in everything else—we must get back to Christ.

Middle-aged men of to-day who were bred in the country or in small towns will remember how we learned to write by attempting to imitate a line of faultless script at the top of the

page in the copy-book. There were so many as a dozen blank lines to the page, topped with the ideal which we were asked to emulate. Our first line was not a bad imitation of the pattern. We were close to the model then, with no low-grade work interposed between what we were doing and what our teacher had done. True, it was lamentably imperfect, but the general slant of it was at about the same angle as the teacher's work; and, while we were not proud of it, we secretly reflected that it might be a great deal worse, which was true—as we were about to prove.

The second line was not so good. We were farther from the pattern now, and our own previous bungle was in the way. Indeed, as we started line three, we wondered whether we were not really copying our own sad mistakes. On line four, we thought to remedy matters by introducing a few ornamental curlycues into the capital letters and feathering the tails of the "g's" and "y's," hoping to distract the teacher's attention from our blunders and gain some credit for an honest effort to make our work less unbeautiful.

But by the time we had reached the bottom of the page, we were growing careless; for the monstrous difference between what we were doing and what the teacher had done was so appalling that discouragement set in to make the final disaster complete and hideous. We were so

far removed from the ideal, at the top, that we could not even approximate it. Obviously, the only cure for our trouble was to get back, somehow, to the pattern.

In many respects our present predicament, in attempting to follow Christ, is about the same as this copy-book experience. Between us, of this generation, and the Man of Galilee, stands an imposing array of more or less unsuccessful efforts to do his will. The page is smeared and blurred with men's crude endeavors to express the lofty sentiments trusted to them as perfect models of conduct and character. Between us and him there is a miscellaneous clutter of the irrelevant and obscuring—blots and blunders scrawled there by many generations of well-meaning but fallible men.

It has been abundantly proved that no system of religion can hope for survival—much less for success—without an adequate recognition of enough ceremonialism and sacramentalism to endow it with the mystical appeal so necessary to its acceptance by the human spirit and to insure it the sort of tradition which makes for continuity from one age to another.

But, however understandingly we may accept and practise these rites and ceremonies, the mechanics of them do have a way of interfering with our view of the ideal pattern, in its simplicity and perfection. Even as we were tempted, as children, to offer a little free-hand art in our

copies of the model at the top of the page—so excellent in its absolute simplicity—we have been disposed to let stoles and surplices, incense and rosaries, amens and hallelujahs, lecterns and altar-cloths, holy days and solemn feasts, water, bread, wine, cups and platters, glorias and benedictions, serve as embellishments to disguise the elemental blunders we were committing in our awkward attempts to follow the copy

This is not to deride these sacred properties and emblems of historic Christianity. We live in an algebraic world where certain concrete signs and symbols must ever stand for certain abstract and abstruse ideas and ideals. The symbol loses its value only when it obscures the ideal instead of illumining it. Vestments and liturgies are of high significance up to the very point where a debate arises over whose vestments are the more nearly correct and whose liturgy is the more nearly authoritative. The usefulness of all such things leaves off at the exact point where contention about them takes on.

If we are to get back to Christ, clearly the way is not over the path of tradition in the field of æsthetics; seeing how far we have come, and through how many phases this development of æstheticism has passed since Jesus announced, one noon, beside a well in Samaria: "God is a Spirit."

We must expect to find—if we really mean

what we say about our desire to get back to Christ—a religion free of any trappings, furniture or holy implements. This does not mean that we are to proceed, in this generation, without rite or ritual, church buildings or church traditions. We cannot very well get along without such things, for they all visualize facts for us. But if it is the unadulterated Galilean Gospel that we think we need these days, let us be aware that the bulk of our ecclesiastical observances have shut us off from a clear view of that message, instead of opening a way to it.

Everybody who knows anything about the history of religion appreciates the fact that there must be statements of faith, creeds, and confessions, for the same reasons that political states must have constitutions and business organizations must have charters. New conditions of living may require that political constitutions be amended, and new circumstances in business may make new charters necessary; but it is important that there shall be certain beliefs, aims, and objectives clearly set before any social group endeavoring to make common cause of a definite ideal or a concerted task. No fault is to be found with the fact that the Christian Church has formulated creeds.

But with whatever reverence we may regard these documents, they, too, have often obscured the Galilean model; not so much, perhaps, by their actual declarations as in the astounding

amount of elemental fact about Jesus' message which they left undeclared. In the most ancient, most authoritative, and most widely accepted creed of Christendom, there is nothing between Jesus' being "born of the Virgin Mary," and his having "suffered under Pontius Pilate," but a comma. There is a serious omission here—an omission which leaves the impression that the only noteworthy events in Jesus' life were his birth and death. It is doubtful if the creed will rediscover for us those principles which, we believe, could redeem the social order from its present plight.

Herein resides a strange situation, in view of the fact that the Master thought and talked of himself as a teacher and invariably addressed his followers as "disciples"—a word which had the exact value that the word "student" has with us. It is strange, in the light of the fact that he staked his whole ministry upon his teachings which, he declared, were divinely communicated to him, that practically the entire emphasis of the church should have been placed upon his nativity and his tragedy. One doubts if this could have been his wish, for he was quite insistent that it was his message he wished to leave. "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away." "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them—" "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak

unto you, they are spirit and they are life." "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Open the Gospels at random, and you will find spread before you some statement of the Master's relating to the high importance of his message—and not much wonder that he was so insistent about this, for "as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."

Who will attempt to explain this apparent conspiracy among all the cultural agencies in and adjacent to the Christian Church to reduce the whole career of Jesus to its earthly beginning and end? A cursory glance at ecclesiastical art —so largely responsible for shaping public thought about Jesus—reveals the astonishing fact that almost every great picture finds him either in his mother's arms or dying on his cross. One wishes to say it reverently, but one must say it strongly, that when the Lord Christ does contrive to project his message into the minds of Christians, he has literally to fight his way past his baby pictures. This is not quite fair to a great teacher. No other eminent teacher in the world's history has fared so badly, nor Socrates, nor Plato, nor Aristotle, nor any other. Great teachers deserve to be remembered for their teachings, and most of them are—all of them are, but the greatest of all.

Sometimes I have wished—much as I delight

in what the Christmas story means and has meant to the imagination of the Christian world —that the first sight a potential believer might have of Jesus would be the introduction Mark gives him in that first and most important of the Gospels; or, if not that, perhaps the first glimpse of him should be on the occasion of his rising, in the little synagogue of Nazareth, where he reads his favorite passage from Isaiah: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty the bruised."

It is not difficult to understand why thoughtful men should be urging our return to Christ. Of course, there is nothing unique about this summons. Paul advised it, in his generation, with as much earnestness. Far-seeing Christian leaders of every age have counselled it. But, while it would be incorrect to say of our generation that the idea had originated with us, it is true that we have extraordinary reasons for hoping and wishing this to come to pass. This is not the place to call the roll of those reasons. Mere mention of the bewildering surge of a new and audacious anarchy, exhibited in unexpected quarters; the wholesale flouting of law and order; the alarming abrogation of certain long-held beliefs and conventions in the field of common morality; the terrifying increase of crime

among half-grown boys; the careless contempt for venerable institutions; the tendency of democracies to degenerate into mere clamorous mobocracies, until it is a matter of debate whether the magical word "liberty" has not begotten more problems than it has solved; the break-up and bafflement of insolvent political states, ruined through costly efforts to preserve their so-called honor—mere mention of these conditions is enough. If Christianity is to solve these problems, it is time we found out exactly what Jesus taught.

It may be presumed that most people are agreed on this, and that the only point of difference in our opinion is in the matter of technic. We all want to get back to Christ. How shall we do it?

One suggested method is the "revival." But that is not taking us back toward Christ much farther than the days of our own great-grandfathers. This is not to indict that procedure at all. There can be no question but men have had their lives completely transformed through such response to an emotional appeal; and any procedure that makes people over and sends them forth with a new purpose is beyond the reach of sneers. But the "revival" is able to work these transforming miracles only upon a distinctive group of persons whose emotions are readily on call. It leaves stolidly unstirred an unaccountable number who cannot be reached that way,

who have no equipment for reacting to such an appeal.

Moreover, its hypotheses have to do mainly with the salvation of the individual. Its social message is inadequate. It is utterly impotent to deal with the most serious problems of our time. If it should be contended, by apostles of this school of thought, that our problems might be solved if men would submit themselves to the technic they recommend, one is forced to reply that this method will not be practicable until its major premise is stated in some more convincing mood than the subjunctive.

Another proposed method of getting back to Christ starts with the theory that men are not sufficiently informed about Jesus' life and deeds. Unquestionably the world would be much the better if a larger number of people knew the full story of that life from Bethlehem to Golgotha. But, for present purposes, as between knowing either everything he did or everything he said, it is more important that we should have his words.

It is pursuant to that belief that this little book endeavors to make an interpretation of Jesus' sayings. As most of his precepts were deduced from parables, it is natural that such a work should deal with these stories at some length and in detail. Commonly, the parables are spoken of as "simple, homely little tales of humble life." It is to be doubted if, in the

whole field of literature, sacred and secular, one is likely to encounter any proposition more complicated, thought-provoking, and thoroughly mystifying than is involved in these "simple" parables. Whoever thinks they are simple should spend a few hours with one of them, and discover that what he thought was a little one-room house is only the vestibule to an interminable labyrinth.

There has been no attempt to present these parables as complete units: that is, there is not a chapter on "The Prodigal" and another on "The Talents." Sometimes a half-dozen parables will be grouped as of a definite order, and to be studied in relation to one another. One chapter attempts to deal with the parables clearly addressed to the adolescent mind. Another presents a group of parables spoken to the disciples alone. It will be observed that the author is endeavoring to show how Jesus, having proclaimed himself "the light of the world," leads his disciples gradually into a consciousness of their trusteeship in civilization, ultimately delegating certain rights and powers to them in his declaration: "Ye are the light of the world."

Doubtless many readers will wish there had been some foot-notes, giving scriptural references and bibliography. Others will be glad to find the book uncluttered with any research machinery. Unable to please both types, I have satisfied myself. There are no references, but

the original source of information is not far to seek.

There has been left out of this book everything that might be considered controversial. This is not to mean that the author has no convictions about certain matters now ardently debated by Christian leaders, but that there is enough elemental truth in Christ's message—absolutely beyond the reach of contention—to save the whole social order from its present blunders. It is that elemental truth we have neglected, while tithing mint, anise, and cummin, and staging impressive forensic battles over matters which, one suspects, will never be settled to general satisfaction—debates which, in very many instances, have been mere quarrels with the dictionary.

We are agreed that the gospel of Christ can save the world. Let us make an honest effort to find out what that gospel is, and see whether it is able to prescribe for the problems of this second quarter of the twentieth century.

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THESE SAYINGS OF MINE

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

CHAPTER I

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

LATE in the reign of Augustus Cæsar there appeared in the least valuable of his unimportant Palestinian provinces an itinerant prophet, who calmly and confidently said of himself that he was the light of the world.

To all outward seeming no man ever had less warrant to utter so startling a declaration, for which there was lacking even such frail authorization as might be conferred by church or state.

Born in a stable and reared in a village carpenter-shop, possessed of no influential friends, educational advantages, or any broadening contact with the outside world; with no money in his pocket and no credentials in his hand, this man, trailed by a dozen unlettered fishermen and farmers, whom he had invited to accompany him, announced to his countrymen that he was the light of the world. And nobody smiled.

Only a small minority accepted the astounding phrase at its face value, and of this minority but few even made pretense of understanding its implications. His little retinue of disciples sometimes thought they comprehended the full import of these words; but the difficulty they ex-

perienced in retaining their grip on this tremendous idea is evident from the record which asserts that on the very eve of his crucifixion, the Nazarene was still endeavoring to explain to the bewildered group of men who had shared his friendship and his poverty the peculiar nature of his mission and the uniqueness of his message. He did not berate them for their inability to understand. They only did credit to their honesty and sincerity when, even at that latest moment, they propounded queries disclosing the extent of their perplexity.

Certain contemporary wiseacres, invited by their neighbors to express an opinion concerning the young preacher, declared that he was possessed of a devil—the current vernacular for insanity. Others denounced him as a sacrilegious scoffer. But nobody dismissed his case with a shrug or an airy gesture of indifference. The charge that he was "beside himself" did not satisfy the public. Neither was it contented with the priests' verdict that the strange Galilean was a scoffing impostor with an itch for popularity. He had made no demands looking toward personal profit. He had attempted no organization, had proposed no mass-movements, had incited no rebellion. It was an indisputable fact, in the opinion of the laity, that he had no selfish ends to serve.

Great multitudes followed him from village to village. The hoe was dropped in the garden, the

flail was tossed aside on the threshing-floor, the basket was left half-empty in the vineyard, and the forge-fires died, while their humble custodians trudged for miles, through the heat and dust, to hear the new prophet who had captured the imagination of his countrymen.

Because all this occurred at a time which antedated journalism, there is a minimum of impressionistic comment, in the gospel literature, concerning the mind and mood of the typical crowd that gathered to listen to these addresses. Beyond the statement that the people were astonished at his teaching, the profound impression created by Jesus' sermons must be deduced from the fact that thousands followed him, not infrequently at serious inconvenience. That no conscious effort was ever made to stage these great meetings in such a manner as to call out large attendance, is revealed by the statement that on one occasion, at least, the Master deliberately attempted to avoid a crowd by crossing the lake in a boat to a desert place where, a little later, the throng found him and demanded an address.

There must have been a strange fascination in his speech, both as to manner and matter. No one cross-section of society felt it less keenly than the others. It is said that the common people heard him gladly; but that his audiences were not composed exclusively of common people is shown by the frequency with which other

groups are mentioned whose interest in his message seemed greater than their reluctance to become part of a conglomerate multitude. His precepts were usually illustrated by original parables dealing with the rudimentary facts of common life; but his words were not too elementary for Nicodemus or too profound for Nathaniel.

Although the world of that day was an institution intended primarily for adults, little children are much in evidence throughout this story of the Man of Galilee. Tiny tots wriggled their way through the crowd, and fearlessly clustered about him. Customarily, in any exchange of amenities between an adult stranger and a young child, the initiative arises with the former, and considerable persuasion is usually necessary to induce the normal child to venture upon an untried acquaintance. It is reported that the Galileans had to defend Jesus—or thought they had to—from the voluntary attentions of their little folk, in the face of his assurance that the children did not annoy him.

It is to be suspected that there was a peculiar relationship between the Nazarene and little children which has not received enough attention at the hands of students. With their inherited hates not yet brought to noxious flower, with no cultivated prejudices to climb over, with no credal walls to scale, with nothing but instinct to guide them, these children not only

approached Jesus in full confidence but with a mysterious capacity for understanding. And one is disposed to believe that his attitude toward them was not merely that of adult patronage, caressingly toying with their curls and smiling benignly into their wondering eyes, but, rather, an expression of deep respect for these little ones who, because of their lack of general misinformation about life, were so much better able than their seniors to comprehend his teachings.

Social outcasts, venturing to brook the contempt of the multitude, elbowed their way into his presence. This was not an easy thing to do. The typical Jewish crowd was quite self-conscious on the subject of its respectability. The unfortunate who had earned public disapprobation knew better than to obtrude himself upon an assembly of the Chosen, for a Hebrew throng was not beyond stoning an undesirable whose presence lowered the moral tone of the event that had convened it.

But these hapless wretches threw discretion to the winds when Jesus spoke. There seemed a chance, even for them, in the adoption of a programme of life which demanded a clean break with a sorry past and a triumphant facing of a radiant future. They had become accustomed to censure, hardened to accusations, stolid under invective and abuse. The Hebrew language was rich in the phraseology of vituperation, and they

had heard it all. Every day somebody was odiously comparing his own abundant righteousness with their shameful lack of it. But here was a moral mentor who, making no discrimination between the self-admittedly righteous and the self-confessedly sinful, demanded of all a complete re-appraisal of life's imperatives—a change of attitude equivalent to a second birth.

Naturally, the lure of this call to a new life met a much readier response in the breast of the man who was conscious of having registered a total failure than in him whose self-satisfaction was disclosed in his every tone, posture, and gesture.

Many respectable people were frankly disappointed when Jesus accepted invitations to dine with persons who had received—and probably not without warrant—public chastisement or disfavor. It was clear that Jesus was making no endeavor to surround himself with an exclusive clientele. Community leaders who asked him into their homes were taught to expect that presently the dooryard would be filled with a miscellaneous aggregation of rags on crutches and tatters in disrepute, to whom he would be as courteously disposed as toward his hosts.

On one occasion a reformed woman, whose trade had not trained her to be reticent, audaciously entered an eminently respectable home, where Jesus was being entertained at dinner, and showered him with the contents of a costly vase

of rare perfume. Quite a scene ensued. It was an embarrassing moment for all present, except the principals. The woman's satisfaction in having accomplished her act of gratitude loomed too large in her mind to admit of any self-reproach for the intrusion, or chagrin over the indignation of the party. She had accepted the new formula for triumphant living; and, in an ecstasy of joy over the first full realization of her great discovery, she was willing to go to any length of adventure to show her appreciation. How she may have come by the expensive perfume is not stated, but any active imagination will find here all the materials for the construction of a richly dramatic event.

Jesus accepted the situation with dignified courtesy. One would think, from his manner, that an experience like this was "all in the day's work." It might be natural to assume that this questionably-arrived-at spikenard would be an intolerable reek in the sensitive nostrils of one to whom anything less than spotless chastity was an abhorrence. But Jesus did not divest himself of his aromatized robe, or ask for the loan of another. He seemed grateful for the tribute. What the woman had done, in an impulsive outburst of appreciation, would be told and retold as long as his programme of life was taught in the world, he said; and truthfully enough. At all events, we are retelling it yet, and considerable time has elapsed.

Jesus' respectable friends, however, no matter how magnanimous they wished to be in their attitude toward his disregard of the austere conventionalities, never understood his sympathetic tolerance of publicans and sinners. Clearly, the only way to keep the delinquent in order was to frown upon his misbehavior. What was to become of society, indeed, if publicans and sinners were able to boast to their betters that their questionable hospitality was quite as good, in the opinion of a recognized moral leader, as that of the self-conceded saints of the community? Nor was this an unpardonable query. Life would soon become practically unlivable, for any social group the world over, if moral turpitude were permitted to go unrebuked by the powers responsible for public decency and integrity.

It will have to be borne in mind that Jesus' attitude of sympathetic interest in the social outcast was not founded upon any mere sentimental condonement of immorality, or a nonchalant indifference to the problem of delinquency, but was rather in pursuance of his hope to show his contemporaries how little difference existed, after all, between the pretended righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees and the candid lawlessness of the publicans and sinners. In the judgment of his new standard for ideal living, there was nothing to choose between them; and he could express his sentiments on

this subject no more effectively than by accepting the hospitality of these social outlanders on exactly the same terms as he became the guest of the publicly esteemed.

It is not to be supposed, however, that Jesus neglected his opportunities to bring immoral persons face to face with the precise truth about themselves. How seriously he must have talked to the grafting little Zacchæus, with whom he dined, may be imagined from the fact that this diminutive tax-collector volunteered to restore to each person he had defrauded four times the amount of the peculation. And if candor seems to be lacking from the inquisition Jesus conducted for the benefit of the Samaritan woman, whom he met by chance at Jacob's well, it is surely the fault of the reader.

There must have been a searching penetration in the eyes of Jesus—a penetration capable of stripping a man stark naked of his official vestments and cultivated pretenses. So strikingly does this quality invest his recorded words that one finds it easy to understand how it must have affected the people who heard him utter them. That the face of Jesus did not wear a stern or menacing expression is evident from the fact that little children edged their way closer about his feet until he was surrounded by them. This may have been because their untutored innocence matched his experienced purity. But adults who came into direct contact with his

gaze invariably noted the frightening disparity between their character and his. When they voiced their sensations, their observation was variously phrased, according to the individual's temperament and culture. The rich young ruler and the wise old lawyer inquire, with emotion: "What shall I do?" An unsophisticated fisherman more crudely expresses the same thought when, upon meeting Jesus for the first time, he growls, roughly: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man!"

Nor was this peculiarity of Jesus' personality remarked only by men who appear in the Gospel record as his friends. His enemies felt it, too. Spies, hired by the established priesthood to trail the Nazarene and, if possible, to entangle him in argument and bring back adverse reports of his addresses, returned to the temple to confess that nobody had ever talked like this man. When pressed by their employers to be more specific, they could only assert that he spoke as one authorized. By whom or from whence this evident authority had been derived they did not offer a conjecture. They were only sure that he was different. No scribe had ever spoken in this manner.

No one of his contemporaries, however, either friend or foe, was in a position to comprehend the full significance of his words. His countrymen were quite too close to him to see him clearly. Not even Peter or James or John, who

knew him best, was able to view his teachings in their larger reaches. It required the acid of Time to etch out all the local, incidental, temporary, and irrelevant details from that picture of life lived supremely. And although the present-day Christian may be justified in singing, "I wish I had been with them then," it is unquestionably true that in the face of history and civilization's increasing experience of the remarkable rightness of his teachings, we moderns may accept his declaration—"I am the light of the world!"—with more understanding than they who actually heard him speak these words.

There are good reasons for believing that each successive generation has less excuse than its immediate predecessor for exhibiting any reluctance to accept Jesus on the terms of his own self-appraisal.

II

While it is not strictly within the province of this study to examine the supernormal aspect of Jesus' sayings—for our inquiry hopes to concern itself chiefly with their practical bearing upon present-day problems—any serious investigation of the Master's precepts leads inevitably toward this subject, inasmuch as these trenchant sayings stand forth in high relief against any other lore, ancient or modern.

The distinction which must be made between Jesus' and any other's ethical code is not a specific difference, like that which exists between an aster and a chrysanthemum. It is not a mere difference of beauty or dimension, like that which distinguishes the receiving vault in a village cemetery from the Taj Mahal. It is, rather, a generic difference, like that which exists between an oak and a seaweed. It is a categorical difference, far wider than the gulf between the bust of Pericles and a text-book on ceramics. The deliverance of any one of these other moral codes was either but a local incident, of importance to a given era and area, or lacked any uniqueness which might serve to identify it from the cult whence it had been derived.

When we thoughtfully approach these sayings of the Galilean teacher, we find ourselves concerned with something greater than a "wisdom literature," such as the justly venerated Solomonic proverbs, the Davidic injunctions, the golden words of Marcus Aurelius, or the august Confucian maxims. All these ancient codifications of ethics are so clearly designed to serve the thoughts and regulate the conduct of a certain racial type, living in a given epoch, that they are now preserved mostly as objects of interest in morality's museum. We are happily surprised when, despite their antiquity, we discover therein some principle of practical availment in our modern lives. The sagacity of

a Hebrew king who, thirty centuries ago, advised the sluggard to study the habits of the ant, prompts us to laudation of his wisdom. In precisely the same mood, however, we gaze upon an ancient weapon in a reliquary, remarking to our friend that it is not such a bad sword, even if it was made away back in the Elizabethan days.

Were Jesus' sayings to have been presented to humankind in the form of an open letter, that communication would require neither address nor date. His comments on the conditions under which life must be accepted might have been uttered five thousand years ago or the day before yesterday; in southern Galilee, or east Cornwall, or North Carolina, or west Africa. The translation of them, from one language to another, has not affected their beauty or depleted their force. They dealt with life's rudiments.

Only the more introspective of an exclusive caste would ever expect to derive much help from the mystical considerations of Buddhism; and, as for adapting it to the occidental mind, it is hopeless to the last outpost of absurdity. Constantly we are reminded by philologists that no one can be expected to appreciate fully the beauty and strength of the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes unless he reads them in the language wherein they were delivered. The cultured Moslem insists that the Koran is at a heavy disadvantage when conveyed through

any other medium than Arabic. By magnanimously conceding this to be true, one who is not conversant with Arabic will find it easier to understand how the compositions of the famous camel-driver might presumably command the intellectual respect of Islam.

Not only are the sayings of Mohammed difficult to transport through an alien tongue; they do not appear to thrive, even in their native language, when carried into a fully civilized country. In one of our greater mid-Western cities, possessing a large foreign population, a group of broad-minded philanthropists resolved to build a mosque, in the belief that it would prove a source of help and happiness to the Moslems who had come to make that place their future home. Only a handful ever came into that place of worship, and even they did not come very long. After a futile effort to encourage these people in the conservation of their native religion, the promoters abandoned the experiment. Whatever Mohammedanism may have meant to these people back in Turkey, it lacked either the reach or the grip to hold them in Michigan. It would be as difficult to put a newly hatched chicken back into its shell as to reconstruct for the Moslem on American soil the religious environment and the spiritual values of his symbols and sacraments, apparently so deeply venerated by him previous to his migration.

Without meaning to minify the service any

other religion than Christianity has rendered to its disciples, it is obvious that the teachings of Jesus stand alone in the universal capacity of their appeal; and however respectful the broad-minded student may be in his attitude toward the founders of other faiths, it is apparent that the world at large never considered the advent of any one of them as of sufficient importance to require the opening of a new calendar, saying: "We will begin again. This shall be known as Day First, of Year One!"

Perhaps the most spectacular fact to be predicated of Jesus' sayings at the present hour relates to their immutability. It was no rhetorical extravagance when he said: "My words shall not pass away." Not only do they exhibit no signs of passing away, but they require no modification. To say this of any cultus whatsoever in the twentieth century is equivalent to placing it in a category prepared for its exclusive occupancy. We can well afford to linger for a while in the vicinity of this thought; for here is something quite too important to be taken for granted and passed by heedlessly.

The changes registered by our modern times in every field of scientific and philosophical inquiry have been so radical that a man, returning from any previous century, would hardly recognize any fact or force with which he had had to do.

No sooner does any scientific crusade pitch

its banner on an imagined summit of the hill it had laboriously scaled than the dissolving mists permit a view of another more precipitous grade to be climbed. Surely, no other group of pilgrims have had more right or reason to say, when asked for their home address: "Here we have no continuing city."

Doubtless the layman, who makes no pretense of keeping informed even on the more startling advents of these new theories which from time to time reduce the value of certain scientific text-books until they are worth no more than they will fetch per pound at the junk-shop, will appreciate best the nature of these thought-innovations by considering the procession of theories in the development of modern medicine and surgery.

So intriguing is this story that it is with the utmost resolution we turn from the temptation to rehearse it all, beginning in the remote days of magical brews, prophylactic and remedial, deduced from bats' wings and toads' tongues. The case can be made, however, more briefly. Men now in their forties have seen the treatment of certain prevalent diseases changed as far as the East is from the West. Maladies once seeming to demand that the patient be starved now require feeding. A formerly fatal disease that enjoined the patient to be shielded from the air and from exercise, to extend by a few months the period of his inevitable decline, now

forces him out in all weathers, with at least a tentative promise of recovery.

Latter-day pathology suspects that the first President of the United States actually lost his life at the hands of well-meaning blood-letters. It was in a time when the surgeon—who was significantly called a leech—felt that any sick was in better case if relieved of some surplus blood, no matter what ailed him. As we enter the second quarter of the twentieth century transfusion is as commonly invoked as was bleeding in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It is only a little while since medical men first recognized the importance of "surgical cleanliness" in the aseptic treatment of all lesions. There were only five clinical thermometers in the whole Army of the Potomac, and the first book on clinical thermometry was published quite within the lifetime of men still actively engaged in the practice of medicine.

Diagnosis of pathological conditions within the thoracic and abdominal cavities, made by the X-Ray photograph, has been but high-class guesswork, or, at least, coincidental verification of previous conjectures on the part of the diagnostician, until a few months ago, when the introduction of the stereoscopic principle to the reading of such plates added a third dimension to the perspective, and thus promoted this type of diagnosis to an honored place among the exact sciences.

Until recently the microscope was little more than an interesting toy, helpful to botanists and other naturalists. For ages it progressed very little. A magnifying glass with a focal length of nine diameters was found in the ruins of Herculaneum. It was almost as strong as the microscope in use during the Presidency of Thomas Jefferson. Then a new discovery of the physicists introduced more light into the instrument, capable of counteracting the increasing opacity of a heavier lens, thus lifting the whole device at once into an estate of such usefulness that its disclosures revealed a hitherto undreamed-of microcosmic world, inviting researches in bacteriology, with the consequent relief of civilization from certain age-old plagues and pestilences whose very names had made kings tremble.

To linger over the dramatic tale of the application of such energies as electricity to the expanding requirements of modern life—each advancement made through the dethronement of some hard-and-fast hypothesis, and the acceptance of a new one—is to review what every schoolboy knows. In all fields of human knowledge changes are now being effected, without tardiness or protest, attesting to the scientist's magnitude of mind in that he is willing, at any time, to discard a cherished and apparently "immutable" theory for another undeniably better.

So rapidly have these changes come to pass

in these latter years that we are quite accustomed to altering our views quickly and without chagrin. No advocate is required to plead the case of the couplet: "New occasions teach new duties: Time makes ancient good uncouth!"—for of no previous generation could it be said that men's minds were so receptive as ours to fresh evidence concerning the world in which we live, the conditions under which life may be spent most happily and effectively, and human energy brought to its maximum capacity.

These things being true, no generation has ever been in a position to appreciate so fully as ourselves the uniqueness of a body of wisdom delivered nearly twenty centuries ago by one untaught even in the elementary philosophy and crude scientific inquiry of his day; a body of wisdom composed by one who spent his brief life in the obscure provinces of an effete country, quite off the highway of commerce and the arts; whose people were so enmeshed in a maze of restrictions that they were even inhibited against making any disclosures of their genius and imagination through the chisel or brush, who never invented anything that would ease men's backs of their physical burdens, whose only boast was the vanished glory of their nation's past, and whose chief aversion was any hint of innovation, either in motive or manner; a body of wisdom which, at this long reach of nearly two thousand years and seven thousand

miles, is regarded, at this hour, by the world's more progressive civilization as the last word on the subject of perfect living.

Here is something that may not be easily explained. During the last three centuries, which register the greatest discoveries and the most rapid advancement of our social order, while every other field of thought and action has undergone revolutionary changes, nobody has had the inclination or audacity to suggest any amendment to, or deletion from, this Galilean programme of life. It has proved as adaptable to the modern Occidental, rejoicing in his democratic liberties, his industrial ingenuity, his charted globe newly mapped from pole to pole, his fluoroscope, airplane, radio, and radium, as it was to the ancient Oriental, ploughing his outworn soil with a crooked stick, grinding his meal in a mortar, and dreamily wondering what lay beyond the immediate horizon of his stationary world.

The only criticism ever launched against this ethical code of Jesus, by any responsible person, is the objection that it is quite too lofty in conception to be more than feebly approximated by the average human—a charge which constitutes as high a compliment as may be paid to any theory, whether in the realm of the physical or metaphysical.

This one fact alone, that this body of wisdom, known as the sayings of Jesus, has neither re-

quired nor experienced any change throughout the course of civilization's emergence from the mental and moral degradation prevalent two millennia ago to its present state of enlightenment, should lead any normal mind to suspect the supernatural character of these teachings. If by the word "miraculous" one designates that which may not be satisfactorily explained on natural grounds, then these sayings of Jesus not only belong in the field of the "miraculous," but unquestionably head the list of all the inexplicable wonders before which the reverent and inquiring mind now stands in awe.

III

Upon arriving at this decision, however, we find ourselves but crossing the outer threshold of this baffling mystery; for, not only has this body of wisdom required no change through the ages, but certain of its hypotheses have only recently been permitted to function at anything like capacity, leading one to suspect that civilization's increasing demands in the future will disclose many practical values, still unrecognized, in the maxims of the Man of Galilee.

For centuries certain admonitions of Jesus were obeyed—when they were obeyed—for the sole reason that the Christian thereby hoped to meet the conditions governing his admittance into a celestial world of peace and joy. But the

time came when it was apparent to civilization's leaders that, however meritorious such observances might be in assuring immortality to the individuals who practised them, human society would be obliged to obey these regulations to insure itself against disaster.

To feed the hungry, house the homeless, and minister to the sick was found to be considerably more than the earning of moral credits to be deposited to the spiritual account of Christians interested in their souls' survival in another world. These tasks, as civilization's problems became more and more complex, were seen to be absolutely imperative to the welfare of the social order in this present life. Hungry and homeless people constituted a heavy liability to any community. Sick people furnished a problem more immediate than the providing of certain benevolent and sympathetic persons with a heaven-earning obligation. To deal more humanely with the imprisoned, whom long-established custom flung into mouldy dungeons to die of scurvy and insanity, was more than a pious injunction laid upon the faithful devotees of a religious cult. It was a stern economic necessity.

How long commerce haggled over its split-penny dickerings, each merchant cautious against tipping the scales, ever so slightly, in his customer's favor, before it was discovered that "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over," is a principle of mercantile

success! Many generations were to pass, after those words were first spoken, before the world of barter and trade awoke to the fact that the secret of commercial success is good measure. The soundness of this theory is seen in the rewards of its practical application, whenever and wherever it is tried. Frequently, men who had struggled along, ashamed of their failures to achieve anything either in material property or personal satisfaction, have literally made their lives over by adopting this principle of tipping the scales in favor of the customer. The workman who has his labor to sell remembers the day with pleasure that marked his resolve to invest a margin of effort in his task, above that actually required of him. He finds that it is the labor, in excess of the work for which he had contracted, that leads to his advancement in the esteem of his employer and his promotion to positions of trust befitting his capacities. The professional man now understands that his success depends upon his willingness to do for his client, or his patient, or his patron, a little more than the law exacts.

Only in recent times has this principle, enunciated so long ago along the shores of Lake Gennesaret, found acceptance as a sound economic theory. Whereas formerly it was considered one of the more difficult of the "impracticable" teachings of Jesus, any man who now disputes its working value merely announces his

candidacy for defeat at the hands of a generation which has learned that it is the margin of work and interest that guarantees prosperity.

It may confidently be believed that certain sayings of Jesus, still ignorantly considered "impracticable" and "visionary," will ere long come into their own. Perhaps the most difficult of these teachings, to the modern mind, was his pronouncement on the subject of "non-resistance." In the private relations of individuals throughout civilized society this principle is observed to a greater extent than ever before. And now that we have achieved such dreadful tools of militancy that the complete annihilation of whole cities, hundreds of miles from a seat of war, is not only possible but probable, in the event of another clash between the scientifically advanced nations, it may be presumed that we must either adopt the Master's "impracticable" peace-programme or bid for the utter demolition of present-day civilization.

We therefore find the sayings of Jesus not only presenting a changeless code of prescribed human action, requiring neither amendment nor revision to suit the demands of any age or country, but offering solutions to social problems which civilization now tardily considers, after having adventured unsuccessfully with every other way, over a stretch of two thousand years. Whoever can explain this on natural grounds has every right to do so. The fact that

such explanation has not been offered to the satisfaction of thoughtful men leads one to the belief that these sayings of Jesus constitute a body of wisdom supernormally delivered, and that no doubt may reasonably be entertained that the Master, in proclaiming himself "the light of the world," defined his relation to humanity in terms which, for truth and clearness, could not have been surpassed.

IV

In attempting to arrive at a satisfactory working phrase to comprehend the sayings of Jesus, we have been referring to them as "a body of wisdom." This arbitrary designation, temporarily used in default of a better one, will no longer suffice, now that we have reached the conclusion indicated above. If this ethical code has been supernaturally delivered, we must now deal with it as something greater than a literature. It must be conceived of as an energy. Nor is this difficult to do when it is remembered that the kinetic power of these sayings has become immediately felt in the promotion of a new culture and the creation of increased liberties wherever it has gone.

One of the peculiar functions of this energy is its capacity to set men free. It may be imagined that in some primitive social group two neighboring families had long regarded each other

with suspicion and distrust. The heads of these houses lived in mutual fear and hatred. Neither dared leave his cave, to hunt, fish, or adventure beyond hailing distance, lest the other do him and his some injury. By common agreement, after an extended reign of terror, these people resolved upon a programme of definite rights and obligations whereby each was permitted to go his way in peace, unharassed by the fear that his unguarded property might be in jeopardy.

This new freedom, arrived at through a compact built upon mutual trust, meant more to these liberated men than the mere extension of their physical boundaries. Now that the mental strain of hatred and suspicion was lifted, there came a new attitude toward life. There was an urge toward the development of inventive ingenuity, self-expression through the graphic arts, music, and the drama, the desire to build objects of beauty, and an inclination to quest the Source of their new-found aspirations.

The freedom granted by this energy involved in the teachings of Jesus is the next step in altruism beyond mutual trust. By its injunctions one does not merely consent to leave one's neighbor's haunch of venison undisturbed, in his absence, in consideration of the neighbor's promise not to steal one's axe. This was about as far as Confucianism was able to go in recommending more harmonious social relationships. Leave me alone, and I'll leave you alone. Keep

your hands off my stuff, and I promise to do the same by you. The sayings of Jesus begin with the assumption that everybody who knows anything at all has discovered that human life would be utterly intolerable under any other programme than such mutual confidence as this. He starts his new code exactly where the others had left off, and proposes an original commandment—"that ye love one another!"

It is interesting to observe the effect of this freedom, arrived at through the acceptance and practice of this principle. So marked is the result of it that the world-tourist needs not be informed, as he travels, which countries are under the influence of this energy, or to what extent; for the fact will be fully evidenced in the very faces of the people he sees. It shows up in their carriage, manners, tone of voice, and whether or not their shrubbery is trimmed and their window-boxes are filled with flowers. And if any one is disposed to question whether this energy has had anything to do with the advancement of the human race, he might make the experiment of drawing a free-hand map of the world, indicating in red ink such areas of it as may be classified as civilized. He will discover when he is done that he has also drawn a map of Christendom.

Should he conclude, upon surveying his findings, that the close association of Christianity and civilization is purely coincidental, he has

only propounded a query to himself quite as impossible to answer as any of the baffling questions he may have encountered in his attempt to account for this energy on natural grounds.

It should be borne in mind that we are not now employing this word "energy" in any rhetorical sense, such as one invokes when speaking of the "language" of the flowers or the "majesty" of a sequoia. The sayings of Jesus constitute an energy as real and dynamic as electricity! It might be added, however, that no social group in this world has ever come into a practical understanding of the uses and benefits of applied electricity until it had first felt the impact of that other greater energy with which our study is concerned. The genius to discover great physical energies and adapt them to human needs never has an opportunity to function until it has been set free of its stultifying fears. Only freemen contribute anything to civilization. And that is why one of the greatest benefits conferred by the sayings of Jesus is the liberating power of their truth. Wherever this energy is applied, it is exactly as if a flood of light had suddenly been turned on! Old fears and superstitions scurry out as the illumination increases. Men can see new duties, new joys, new reasons for living in harmony, by the light generated from this energy.

A recent essay deploring the tardiness of organized religion to adjust itself to scientific dis-

coveries asserts that Christianity has been by far the very worst opponent of such advancement. The essayist was correct in saying that the Church has frequently put itself in the way of scientific progress. In that far the Church was misguidedly interfering with the advancement of humanity. It was not the sayings of Jesus that stepped in the way of progress, but a temporarily mistaken Church, manipulated by men of inflexible mind. Be that as it may, the significant fact is reached when the essayist declares that the other religions have not been such grave offenders. Brahminism has not stoned its physicists. Buddhism has not jailed its chemists. Mohammedanism has never brought a skilled biologist to the block. Shintoism never burned a man for announcing a great discovery in the field of science. Only the Church of Jesus Christ has made such terrible blunders as this. And why is that? Because physicists are not produced under the influence of Brahminism! Brahminism never bred any Newtons, Galileos, or Columbuses! Mohammedanism never had a chance to say what attitude it ought to take toward a Laplace, or a Faraday, or a Watt, or a Pasteur, or a Crookes, or a Marconi, or a Wright! It is only Christianity that has ever been called upon to pass on the rightness or wrongness of some new application of a physical force. The Jesus energy has to make its way, first, in any social group, before

the members of that group are sufficiently relieved of their primitive fears and standardized dulness to be on the alert for discoveries. The exceedingly practical man may be disposed to say of this, smilingly: "But no text-book on physics includes this 'Jesus energy.'" An appropriate and truthful reply might set forth the fact that but for this "Jesus energy" there would be no text-books on physics!

V

In view of all this, we may study with fresh interest the Master's unqualified confidence in the soundness and wonder-working capacity of his own teachings. There was never any question in his mind about the everlasting rightness of them. He knew, and admitted, that some of them were so completely at variance with the ancient and conventional beliefs of men that the introduction of them would amount to revolution. He knew, far better than his traducers, who said at his trial that he was a disturber of the peace, how thoroughly upsetting to the old tyrannies these teachings would be, once they had been brought to the world's attention.

An hour came in this Master's career when even his sworn friends considered the new cultus a lost cause. Surely, if anything was ever to be judged by purely circumstantial evidence, the mission of Jesus came to an inglorious end. But

when he went to the cross—by all human reckoning defeated—it was with martial step; for, however appearances that day were unfavorable to his cause, he knew that he had planted something in the soil of society that nobody would ever be able to dig up! Like leaven in meal, a strange catalyzing energy had been introduced into the spiritual chemistry of civilization. It was his soul, his mind, his life! He was confident, even as death filmed his eyes, that this indestructible element was already at its task of transformation. That catalysis had already set in! Nothing now could ever stop it!

It mattered very little to him that he had been whipped and slapped through the streets of Jerusalem; that he had been manacled and reviled; for every added indignity that day only brought forth increasing evidence that he had succeeded in presenting a highly potential energy to the world.

Not for nothing had the established priesthood adjourned the most solemn and time-hallowed rite of their religion to recognize the importance of what he had been teaching. Not for nothing had the provincial government of Cæsar taken notice of his cause. They had nailed him to a cross—these official representatives of the most honored religion and the most powerful empire in the world, and had declared his case a closed incident. But it was not an incident; and it would not stay closed. They could impale

him and his revolutionary Golden Rule to a cross and watch the blood drip out of him and it; but not for long!

When the crowds along the Via Dolorosa shed bitter tears as he passed, staggering under his shameful load, he said: "You need not weep for me!" Nor was his refusal to be pitied to be accounted for as a sudden flare of martyr's valor. He meant it, in very truth. He knew that he had finished his work. To all seeming, the total results of his mission could be called nothing less or else than complete failure; but Jesus knew that he had laid hold upon life at its most sensitive neural plexus; that he had gripped humanity's trunk-nerve!

In that seemingly pitiful moment, as he died, he freely forgave his persecutors. "They know not what they do," said he. It was true. Had they known, they would not have done it. For whereas, up to that hour, this new ideal had been a localized aspiration, that went about in the keep of a certain individual, now it was released. Now it was free to go its way. Now it was a thing that had wings at the top and roots at the bottom. Any chance breeze would carry it and any soil would reproduce it. So it was borne, by slave-galley and barge and caravan, to the outposts of civilization; and then, not content with the sluggish pace of mystics who carried it for its own sake, the new ideal took passage with the pioneers and adventurers, rid-

ing with them across uncharted seas, over trackless deserts, and through unblazed forests, until it had girdled the world!

It spread until the story of its founder was known in countless homes wherein the far-flung fame of Alexander, Plato, and the Cæsars had never received so much attention as a single syllable of scorn. It spread until the names of the squalid little hamlets through which he had walked on his errands of mercy were household words among multiplied thousands who had never heard of Athens or Memphis or Phœnicia. It spread until even the humble fisher-folk who had trudged at his side in Galilee were figures to be enshrined in marble by the world's master sculptors.

Religion and government had put him to death as a disturber of the peace. No man then living survived long enough to realize just how great a disturber of the peace he was; but he knew. He knew that the world would never be the same after that day. He knew that he had set in motion certain forces so dynamic that any man who tried to thwart them would do so at his peril. The new ideal had all the solidity and permanence of a block of granite. Men who fell upon that stone would be broken—broken in spirit and able to rise over their dead selves to higher things; but upon whomsoever that stone should fall, he would be ground to powder! Behind that cornerstone was an en-

ergy! Jesus sometimes called it his "kingdom." He knew that this kingdom would become a lifting, driving, kinetic force!

Whoever finds in these statements a mere rhetorical exuberance, can give himself an interesting hour by making an attempt to delete Jesus from our present life. If it is suspected that the poets and prophets have sentimentally overrated the Master's importance to civilization, let the critic put this overestimated teacher where he belongs by dropping his name and all allusions to his career from his own speech. Let him resolve that he will consistently refuse to enter any building in which there is an ascription of honor to this teacher; that he will not again look upon any statue or painting which has to do with this man or his message; that he will avoid hearing any music which involves this theme; that he will not read any more history in which the cause of Christianity is at issue. Let him proceed further and discontinue the use of any benefits, inventions, or energies produced as a direct result of education fostered by Christianity.

He will discover that long before he has finished deleting Jesus from his life he has jeopardized everything he holds in esteem. Pontius Pilate, in an uncomfortable moment of perplexity, inquired of the crowd that sought Jesus' life: "What, then, will ye do with Jesus?" This query seems to echo through the centuries. Of

course, any individual who stolidly refuses to recognize the question can contrive to live his whole life without giving it his attention; but only as a pensioner upon the people who do recognize it as worthy of a reply. No social group, however, can evade this query and continue to advance. Their answer to it will determine whether they propose to live in the fog of ignorance and enslavement to fear, or in the light of increasing knowledge and the liberty which knowledge confers; for Jesus is the light of the world!

It is recorded of him, by men who surely had nothing to gain in this world by perjury and everything to lose in a world to come—an estate vastly more important to them than any earthly consideration—that so powerful was his personality and so complete his understanding of human problems that he brought physical restoration to many of his countrymen by a mere word or a touch of his hand.

This might be very difficult to believe had we not already accepted the far greater mystery involved in the eternal energy which motivates his teachings. It does not happen to lie within the scope of our present study to investigate these recorded works of the Master. But, as the greater includes the less, any man who has appraised the sayings of Jesus thoughtfully, recognizing in them the principles which alone can save the world from its blunders of ignorance,

cowardice, prejudice, and doubt, will decide that not only might it have been true that the poor woman who timidly touched the hem of his robe was restored to health and happiness, but that it would have been impossible for her or any one to have touched him and ever to have been the same again.

CHAPTER II

"YE ARE MY FRIENDS IF—"

SO inseparably associated in the Christian's mind are the teachings of Jesus and the unique personality of their author, that the acceptance of his programme of life, as a standard of faith and conduct, is customarily known as "accepting Christ." There is no fault to be found with this phrase, inasmuch as Jesus encouraged his disciples to consider his person and his message as indistinguishably related.

When he invited men to conform their lives to his ideal for triumphant living, he said: "Come unto me." When asked by the twelve to tell them how they might rejoin him in his spiritual abode, he replied: "I am the way."

That the peculiar nature of this identification of the messenger and his message is without precedent or imitation is abundantly proved by the fact that every other advocate known to forensic history has sought to magnify his cause by deprecating his unworthiness to serve as its ambassador. One of the favorite devices of the pleader who would present a new or unpopular issue is to seek common ground with his auditors by bridging the gap between his personality and theirs, either by deferentially compliment-

ing them, in the manner of Mark Antony, or by stressing his own insufficiency, as did Paul, who so frequently adverted to his physical defects, his inability as a public speaker, and his unfitness to act as an attorney for a movement of such vast import.

We have no record of any attempt on the part of Jesus to exalt his message by self-deprecation. He and his words were one. They had been supernormally conveyed to him, he declared, and he was the living exponent and example of their truth. Whoever accepted his teachings, accepted him. Whoever accepted him, accepted them. There could be no such thing as an effective practice of his principles independent of a close and vital relation to his personality; and, in pursuance of that relationship, he said: "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

So thoroughly is this premise interwoven with the admonitions of Jesus that it is small wonder the Christian world has had so much to say concerning the necessity of friendship with him, and has laid so great stress upon the personal attitude of the believer toward the author of his faith.

How this friendship is to be sought and won, and by what tokens the Christian may be assured of its possession, is a subject to which we must turn before we investigate further the nature of his commandments, seeing what large

importance is attached to our personal appraisal of the Master as guide and friend.

Our study of this relationship will be clarified by eliminating, first of all, such overtures as we might be disposed to make toward him, which promise no help. In this process of elimination we may discover that we are discrediting a few of the prevalent beliefs of Christians who have relied upon certain untenable sophistries to bring them into spiritual contact with Jesus.

The first fallacy to be observed, in an unsuccessful attempt to establish relations of friendship with him, is the apparent belief in the minds of many people that he likes flattery and may be appealed to with lavish expressions of laudation. Any one who really wishes to know how little he esteemed ascriptions of praise, offered by persons misguidedly believing that their deference to him might count in their favor, whether they obey him or not, will find his words clear enough on that point, in which he declares: "Not every one that saith unto me 'Lord ! Lord !' shall enter into the kingdom; but he that doeth the will of my Father." Nor was this the statement of a purely hypothetical case. That they were already offering him obeisance in lieu of obedience is indicated by his query: "Why call ye me 'Lord,' and do not the things that I say ?"

He asked them to follow him, to strive to be like him, to obey him; but the record fails to

disclose any hint of a suggestion that they praise him. No desire of his seemed stronger than his longing for friends who would make common cause with him by obeying the precepts which he knew offered so much of happiness, security, and peace. And, surely, if it was friendship that he desired, one finds it difficult to understand how such a relation could ever be arrived at, had he assumed a regal attitude, demanding a mental state of self-abasement and sycophancy on the part of an acquaintance whose love he sought. We may have a King Jesus or a Friend Jesus; but we may not have both. This is not to dispose of the majesty of his person. So constantly does Jesus speak of his "kingdom," that we must not lose sight of his royalty; but we must keep it in mind that this "kingdom," as he remarked to Pilate, "is not of this world."

There is no evidence that Jesus expected or received from his twelve disciples the kind of adoration that savored of court. The spectacle they made on that last night in Gethsemane, when the three closest friends he had in the world slept while he prayed for courage and slept again after he had roused them with a heartbreaking appeal for the support of their alert sympathy, is sufficient to dispose of any idea that might be entertained of a relationship between them like that of a king to his subjects.

Approached on the highway by a wealthy young man, for whom he instantly conceives a

personal fondness, Jesus rebukes him for making use of an ascription of praise. "Why callest thou me 'Good Master'?" he asked. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments!"

Upon one occasion a woman pronounced a tender eulogy upon the body of the mother who had given him birth and ascribed praise to the breasts that had nourished him in infancy. He heard her; and, much as this touching reference to his mother must have moved him, he replied: "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

These facts are of great importance to our correct thinking about the Christian's relations to Jesus, in the face of an ecclesiastical tradition which certifies that almost from the very beginning of its organization as a religious system, unto the present hour, the Church has placed emphasis upon our adoration of Christ as a king, unfortunately to the obscuration of him as a personal friend.

It was only a little while until the woman's fulsome tribute to Jesus' mother—which he had attempted to readjust to its proper position of secondary importance to the blessing deserved by all obedient disciples—had become one of the most conspicuous features of the Church's liturgy.

Our present task is not to minify the importance of a reverential gratitude to Jesus, or indifferently to regard the spiritual value of a

sincere appreciation of the high benefits which have been conferred upon us through him. For, nothing that we can possibly say to him or about him, in expression of our devotion to him as guide and friend, will exceed his rightful due or our manifest obligation. But when our eulogy and eloquence have taken precedence over our obedience and practical discipleship, our praise becomes a mere impertinence, and our worship a mockery.

II

Friendship with Jesus—to consider another prevalent delusion about this relationship—is not arrived at through our letter-perfect knowledge of his biography. In our ordinary friendships, it is quite conceivable that a man may rejoice in the close and stimulating comradeship of some contemporary whose career, until one happened to meet him, is practically unknown. Where and how he may have spent his youth, under what circumstances he received his education, what may have been his experience of travel—of all this one may be ignorant. The real concern of a friendship is, rather: What have these people to contribute to each other now?

It is not to be wondered at that the earnest Christian should find delight in informing himself, as fully as possible, concerning the life of

Jesus. This is not only his privilege, but his duty. And after we have investigated thoroughly the documents which bear testimony to his deeds, his journeys, his every recorded movement, from the manger to the cross, it is only natural that we should regret the brevity of these accounts. We wish that the Gospel of Mark contained sixty-one chapters instead of sixteen.

But, after all has been said about the high importance of our full acquaintance with the biography of Jesus, it is entirely possible for one to be able to recite, with verbal exactitude, the sum total of the memorabilia concerning him and yet fail utterly to enter into the relation of friendship.

Sometimes it seems that our case is strikingly like that of the Pharisees, who punctiliously studied the ancient documents of the earlier prophets, hoping to derive spiritual help from the monotonous task they had set for themselves—piously intoning, hour by hour, the sonorous words of the seers, yet with no endeavor to make these admonitions bear fruit in their daily conduct. To them Jesus said: "Ye search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life. Ye would not come unto me, that ye might have life!"

Because it is so very much easier to teach geography than altruism, our religious instruction, as provided by the educational department

of the average church, introduces Christianity to the little child by placing before him a relief map of Palestine. Presently he will be able to identify the Sea of Galilee, which, he has learned, is about thirteen miles long by four miles wide, subject to sudden gales, its shores thickly populated on the south and west, a desert country bounding it on the east. All this is very interesting to know, but it is not the main issue if the intent of the church school is to present Jesus as the world's light. In the face of this misplaced emphasis in our religious education, which deals so minutely with the national history of the Hebrews, with the topography of the Holy Land, and the local setting of a gospel which never found any considerable encouragement in that vicinity, and where the teachings of Jesus have been given less chance to function than any place else on earth—one wonders if the Christian world might not have been distinctly advantaged if we had never known certainly when or where Jesus lived or anything about his racial connections; informed only of his attitude toward life and his teachings concerning it.

Perhaps a few electrical engineers, whose life-task is the application of this mysterious energy to the demands of modern civilization, remember that Alessandro Volta, for whom the "volt" was named, was born near Lake Como, in 1747, and died in the same vicinity, in 1828; that he was, at different periods of his career, professor

of physics in three European universities; that he was a friend of Napoleon and deeply admired by the emperor of Austria. But it was not at all necessary that the late Charles Steinmetz should have been able to remember these facts about Volta, or ever to have known them, in order to achieve the place of distinction he occupied as a demonstrator of electrical energy.

On the other hand, it is conceivable that an omnivorous reader, with a penchant for biography, might know the story of Volta, from the cradle to the grave, and be able to give fascinating lectures on the dramatic incidents involved in the construction of the "voltaic pile," and still be obliged to stand helpless in the presence of a disabled vacuum-sweeper in his own house, not only unable to make a new one but lacking the capacity to discover the ailing part in an instrument complete but for some minor functional disorder.

One can even imagine a heated argument, possibly resulting in unfriendly words and a cool parting, between two rocking-chair scientists over the exact date on which Doctor Volta received the Copley medal from the Royal Society. One contender, boasting that he had been an ardent student of Volta's career, from his youth up, might assert that this distinction was conferred upon the celebrated physicist in 1791. The other, equally sure of his knowledge, might declare that the Copley medal had been awarded

to Doctor Volta in 1792. And yet, if, in the heat of this controversy, the electric fan, which had been attempting to stabilize the temperature of the room while the debate increased in velocity, were suddenly to become disabled, it is possible that neither of the disputants would know what to do about it. They might be obliged to call—over a telephone whose internal principles were unknown to them—for an electrician to come to their assistance; and, when he came and had been asked to decide the question of the Copley medal date, after he had put the fan back into commission, it is again possible that even he might not be supplied with authoritative information on the point.

If we are to present the teachings of Jesus in such a manner as to give them their rightful chance to perform their work in the world, some arrangement must soon be made to shift the emphasis, in our religious instruction, from the map of Palestine to the Sermon on the Mount. It should also be added, apropos of this matter, that it has been unfortunate, in our attempted teaching of the life of Jesus, that we have felt obliged to present the recorded events of his career chronologically. The engaging nativity stories, so rich in dramatic incident and, consequently, so easy to offer to the insatiable imagination of childhood, have been magnified out of all proportion to their exact importance in relation to the acts and words of Jesus. Arriv-

ing, at length, upon the scene of his ministry, we have consistently featured the spectacular events recorded of him to the almost complete obscuration of the vital principles he enunciated.

A common method of viewing Jesus' powerful personality in an act of service is to contemplate the supernatural deeds attributed to him, usually beginning with the first of these recorded wonders—the transformation of water into wine at the Galilean wedding. Much is made of this, chiefly for the reason that the record places the event first, chronologically, among the mysterious acts of the Master. In view of the fact that this is, of all the miracles predicated of him, the most difficult to comprehend, it seems unfortunate that it should be customarily the first of these baffling problems presented to the little child. For, however difficult it may be to accept the transformation of water into wine, by a word of command, the problem is as nothing compared to the greater query as to the Master's reason for employing divine power in such a cause and on such an occasion.

It is regretfully to be believed that Jesus is more often than otherwise brought to the attention of early adolescence as a magician. It is, also, quite natural that this blunder should be committed; for childhood delights in tales of that which lies quite outside the field of common experience, belonging rather to the fancy-

world in which their active young imaginations rejoice.

Nor is this criticism to be understood as a casual dismissal of the miracles from our thought of the Galilean. Delete the miraculous element from the life of Christ, as recorded in the Gospels, and you have repudiated enough of the story to invalidate the whole of it.

But it is clear that a better balance should be maintained in presenting all the truth about Jesus. He was a worker of wonders, but he was not a mere magician. He was considerably more than a skilful prestidigitator; infinitely more than a physician or a psychiatrist. How often he, himself, expresses anxiety lest he be followed and approved for the sake of the physical blessings he had conferred, or sought "because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." That they might learn his "way of life" was of much higher concern to him than that they might be startled into a bewildered acceptance of him as a Hebrew magician who wrought instantaneous cures. The miracle of the divine friendship was and is a more important fact than the event at Cana of Galilee, and whenever the picture of his life has become so lamentably out of drawing that he looms larger as a wonder-worker than a friend, guide, and teacher, we have missed one of his most insistent advices.

III

It may be entirely superfluous to discuss the fact, in the next place, that friendship with Jesus is not to be achieved through the mere intellectual acceptance of any ancient creed or contemporaneous confession wherein distinctive groups of Christians have endeavored to set forth the beliefs which identify them from all other groups of Christians.

So much has been said on this subject in the recent past that it would seem as if everybody were in full agreement on the matter. Doubtless, only a very small minority of Christians would reply in the affirmative if asked whether, in their opinion, one's signature attached to any formula of faith—traditional or modern—automatically confers a blessing upon the confessor.

It will be well to remember, however, that the creeds and confessions of organized Christianity, while registering obvious imperfections —mostly by the omission of so much that was vitally important—have served to bind the Christians of all ages together in a common cause, and are therefore of inestimable value to a proper understanding of the history and aims of Christianity.

The modern electrical engineer may smile as he studies the drawings of instruments made by Faraday, but he may not scoff! Faraday's crude

machines for the generation of current formed an absolutely indispensable link in the chain of adventure, invention, and discovery which eventually brought a great mystery out into the light of common day to serve mankind.

The sequence of the creeds helps to explain the nature of Christ's conquering kingdom, which is not to be considered as a static force, but a kinetic energy. That his kingdom should grow is not inconsistent with his teachings. A movement that was in his earthly day as a grain of mustard-seed, would develop into a tree with spreading branches. "Greater works than these shall ye do," he said, and apparently with satisfaction that his followers, in the days to come, might increasingly liberate the latent power comprehended in his message.

Creeds, therefore, while they may not be considered so much as "houses to live in as bridges to pass over" (if one may borrow a phrase from Hegel's definition of "truth"), furnish the structure upon which the whole edifice of organized Christianity rests.

The objection is entirely valid which declares that the ancient creed-makers, in their zeal to account for the supernatural as revealed in Jesus, placed more emphasis upon their explanation of how he came by it than upon the use he made of it in his redemptive mission. They attempt to explain the biological process by which he became endowed with supernal wisdom, but

neglect to mention what he taught. In no one of these ancient formulas does the "Golden Rule" appear, even by implication.

Clearly, the largest objection that can be raised against the ancient creeds of the Church is the fact that there is nothing the believer can do about them beyond saying that he thinks them true. They make no demand upon him further than assent. His statement that he believes God to be the "Maker of heaven and earth" is an intellectual affirmation which he shares with many millions of people to whom the Christian conception of God had not been taught. He can confess his belief in the divine character of Jesus without committing himself to the Jesus programme of life. He can even express his belief in everlasting life as a possible attainment without moving a step in that direction. It is to be feared that many have labored under the delusion that belief in these doctrines is the process by which spiritual life grows, if, indeed, it is not an actual insurance of spiritual safety. It should be remembered that to believe in the Fatherhood of God, to believe in the saviourhood of Jesus, to believe in the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, to believe in the forgiveness of sins and the life everlasting is merely to add to one's spiritual liabilities unless one obeys the commandments unequivocally laid down as the conditions under which these blessings are conferred.

The saddest fact about our polemic strifes is not the unbeautiful spectacle presented to the world at large—of Christians scowling at one another while endeavoring to comprehend and teach a gospel of love—although that is sad enough; it is the fact that in our ardent advocacy of controversial matters, we permit the main issue to escape us.

It reminds one of the various objections raised when electrical communication was in its early stages of development. It was announced that a man proposed to send a message over wires fastened to wooden poles. How could a man send a message over a wire? Would the writing go through the wire? How absurd! When telegraphy became an accomplished fact, the public accepted it and made use of it. Most people did not pretend to understand it; they only knew that it was practicable. Messages did actually go across hundreds of miles, by way of wires affixed to wooden poles. Presently it was proposed that a telegraph wire be made long enough to cross the ocean. Loud laughter was heard in many quarters. Here was a man who thought he could plant telegraph poles in the sea! The wire concept and the pole concept were indispensable to each other. It was only after the submarine cable had been demonstrated that many persons reluctantly conceded that telegraph poles were not essential to telegraphy. It could be done, apparently, with wires alone.

After a while the suggestion came that telegraphy could be accomplished without wires. The lay mind was all confused with non-essentials. To have instantaneous communication, you must have poles and wires spanning the distance travelled by the message. Much of our muddy thinking results from an ardent insistence upon things that do not matter.

Jesus says we become his friends by obeying his commandments. There is nothing very complicated about that, for the excellent reason that there was nothing complicated about his commandments. There is always room for long and serious debate as to the proper form for the administration of the sacrament of baptism, and people will always be debating the matter, without solving the problem to the satisfaction of anybody but themselves. No debate, however, can be staged over Jesus' commandment concerning our proper attitude toward the homeless, the hungry, and the sick. A man is not required to know anything at all about metaphysics to understand and obey the doctrine of the second mile, good measure in business, good manners in society, forbearance, generosity, and simple trust in the providence of a fair-dealing God.

On the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus met with his friends for a farewell supper. It was on the occasion of "The Passover"—an ancient feast of the Jews commemorative of that night in

Egypt when, by sprinkling blood upon their doors, the early Israelites were spared in the midst of a great national disaster.

As Jesus passed the cup on that evening, when every loyal Jew was remembering the significance of the day, he found in its crimson depths a peculiar significance. This, too, was blood, symbolic of his own, soon to be shed upon the cross. At that moment it occurred to him to idealize the traditional rite. What had been sacrificial would henceforth be sacramental. He passed the cup to his friends with the request that they drink with him of this blood, expressing the hope that in the days to come, whenever they sat together about the table and the cup was passed, they would remember the purpose of his death. There was nothing very complicated about it. It became seriously complicated, however, at a later date, when theologians, groping through the mists of such baffling terms as "transubstantiation," "consubstantiation," "subpanation," and "impanation," apparently forgot what the whole event was about, in their zeal to explain how and in what degree wine became blood.

Of course, we have happily outgrown and outlived a great deal of such unprofitable controversies, but enough of them still remain to jeopardize the correct thinking of men who should be brought, by the shortest possible route, to a relation of friendship with Jesus. They cannot

be expected to obey his commandments until they love him. They cannot love him until they know him. This, then, is the main issue, and while we may with becoming reverence endeavor to observe the outward forms and ceremonial rites of Christianity, sacred through ages of devoted commemoration, they become mere mockeries if given priority over obedience to Christ's commandments. Doubtless the controversy will never be settled which deals with the technic of sacramental administration; but nobody will ever be required to guess about such questions as: Is it better to love or to hate one's neighbor? Is it better to forgive, or to carry a grudge? Is it permissible to lay a love-offering upon the altar while at enmity with a fellow man whom one has wronged? These are the serious tests of Christianity, and there is no element of uncertainty about them.

IV

Turning now to the more constructive treatment of this theme, it may be observed that any man who desires friendship with Jesus should consider it a pleasant thought that the Master was so deeply concerned with the problem of men's lifework. He knew where the fishing was best. He knew about the industrial problems of the vineyard. The little domestic cares of the homemaker were very real issues, in his regard. He had thought deeply about the problems of

kings going to war, and ambitious men seeking to build tall towers with few brick. He could talk helpfully to shepherds; but that was not because he had the mind of a shepherd. He was not ill at ease in the presence of Nicodemus ben Gorion, probably the wisest old gentleman in Jerusalem. He who only yesterday was sitting on the edge of a fishing-boat, talking in terms of affectionate intimacy with a group of Galileans, this evening smiles at the mental chaos of the Holy City's wisest seer, and remarks: "Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest noc these things?" He was able to call the obscure Nathaniel by his name when he saw him sitting under the fig-tree. Jesus entered whole-heartedly into the problems of humanity.

It was not true of him that because he was of the Jewish race, nobody but a Jew could expect to become his friend. It was not true of him that because he had worked in a carpenter-shop for fifteen years, nobody but a carpenter could find him congenial and interesting. It is a significant fact that, while he had spent half his life handling chisels, saws, and other wood-working instruments, he never uttered a recorded sentence in which any property of the carpenter appeared. He talked about every other craft but his own, which offers an interesting sidelight on the nature of his absolute abandonment of self to make quest of other men's problems.

The Christian has a right to feel that Jesus is interested in his vocation, wants him to succeed in it if it is honorable and worth his efforts; has a right to invoke the guidance of Jesus in his business. If a man cannot realize the friendship of the Master in his lifework, it is doubtful if he can arrive at this relationship at all, seeing that some of the most serious problems of ethics arise in the course of one's daily business. The professional man who, on the threshold of his office in the morning, pauses with his hand on the door-knob to utter the resolve that he will attempt to serve that day as a witness to the truth of Jesus' moral standards, can expect to come into a peculiarly close and vital relationship with a mysterious presence which, at certain strategic times, will seem almost real enough to touch with the physical hand! Persons who assert that this is impracticable only mean that they themselves have never experienced it, probably because they have never made the adventure.

Friendship with Jesus may be cultivated in our recreations. The Galilean was essentially an out-of-doors person. He knew and loved nature. Exactly what he would have to say to our present-day civilization that has walled itself into vast cities where its nerves are frayed by the grind of steel flange on steel rail, rivet-hammers, and the warning-signals of its too rapid transportation, one can only surmise.

Galilee was, by comparison, a very unexciting country. And yet we find Jesus inviting his friends, now and again, to "come apart, and rest awhile," whereupon he would take them to the top of a mountain, or over along the seashore in the neighborhood of Tyre. True, he had much to accomplish in a brief lifetime; but apparently he felt that an occasional day off, communing with nature, in the hills and by the sea, was justifiable.

The Christian can sense the friendship of Jesus in his out-of-door sports and strolls. He can realize, as he watches the tide roll in, that the mood it produces in him probably was the same manner of meditation in the mind of Jesus as he contemplated the tireless work of the waves. It will be no irreverence if he makes a quiet request that he be given, at that hour, something of the spiritual stimulation that must have come to his Galilean friend under such circumstances. As he surveys the landscape from a hilltop, it is easy for him to feel the strange comradeship of one who so often escaped from the depressing contacts of a self-seeking civilization to put himself into an intimate relationship with his Father.

Of course, as everybody knows from experience, the easiest and quickest and most natural way to sense the friendship of Jesus is by way of the performance of a generous deed. A man can live for a whole day in the glow of an appro-

bation as definitely tendered him as if an actual voice had said: "Good work! You are my friend!" But we, who hope to experience this friendship to the full, should seek other contacts with this great spirit than through our charities. We must try to find him in our work, in our play; when we observe a glorious sunset or a splendid dawn.

Many a person who has never sought this friendship is able to confess that he has had curious sensations of a mysterious presence in an hour of bitter loss or bereavement. There can be no doubt that the spirit of Jesus makes advances even to people who have done him much wrong, either by way of actual rejection or cynical indifference, when they have arrived at a moment of dire need. One of the most interesting testimonies in point is that of George Eliot, who states that while engaged in a translation of Strauss's "Life of Jesus," which endeavored to reduce him to the estate of a mere teacher, utterly lacking in any special endowments of a divine character, she once became so fatigued with her labors that she begged the spirit of the Christ, whom she was engaged in disavowing, to give her a sense of peace and rest. She further attests that she was granted that boon.

Whatever one may care to think of all this—the indefensible position of the suppliant; her ingratitude, as displayed by the resumption of her work—it may well be believed that the mag-

nanimous Christ is willing to offer his friendship, sometimes, to persons who had made very little effort to merit that honor. The Gospel records state that Jesus healed the wounded ear of the ruffian who had come out with the party to arrest him in Gethsemane. Apparently this Galilean was able to detach himself from the case and judge it on its own merits, irrespective of how it might affect him personally. The fact that a man had been hurt while on this errand, which meant pain and death to Jesus, was considered as a separate item, quite apart from the circumstances under which it had occurred. Jesus did not stop to argue that the man had it coming to him. All he could see was the wound. It mattered little to him how the man had come by it.

It should be easy for any magnanimous soul to persuade himself that he would like to become acquainted with a man of such intent. One of the charmed words these days is "sportsmanship." Men seem to admire persons who are able to exhibit "good sportsmanship." If one may with reverence venture to say it of Jesus at all, then one must go the whole way with it, and declare that if that designation means magnanimity of mind, the ability to suffer loss with a smile, the capacity to stand up, bravely, under unjust punishment, and pardon enemies with the final breath, then Jesus deserves it said of him. But if it shall be said of him, it must never

again be predicated of any other man; for there has been no other valor, no other sympathy, no other compassion in the world like his.

Only a thoroughly courageous and high-minded person can realize the credit he takes to himself when he believes that Jesus is his friend, for only the courageous and high-minded can ever hope to understand, even in part, the nature of Jesus' heroism.

That friendship, however, is offered to all mankind—to the valorous and the timorous, to the wise and the untaught, to the brilliant and the dull. And the terms of it are always the same: "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

CHAPTER III

"MANY ARE CALLED, BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN"

WHOEVER attempts to analyze the sayings of Jesus must begin with the understanding that many of these precepts were and are applicable to specific groups of people. Most of this teaching was done in parables, involving the simplest of materials. It should be realized, however, that there were many parables addressed to the little company of disciples, in special training for leadership, which could not have been comprehended by the miscellaneous multitude. On at least one occasion Jesus, having delivered a parable to the crowd, repeated it later to his disciples, discussing the more subtle implications of the theme. He explained his reason for doing this on the ground that the smaller circle was better equipped to consider the broader reaches of the parable than the general throng. Said he to his disciples: "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom as it is not given unto them."

The student will find it fascinating to observe the marked difference between the parables spoken to the multitude and to the disciples. A

few of the cases in point will be discussed presently, after we have considered certain other groupings of Jesus' sayings which seem to require our earlier attention.

At this moment we are to focus our interest upon the teachings of Jesus which make a special appeal to the adolescent mind. The Galilean teacher did not say, in presenting this type of parable, that it was of prime concern to youth; but it will be observed that these stories deal with matters which the settled, inflexible mind of maturity is obliged to admit are the problems of adolescence.

An excellent example of this type of practical teaching, addressed primarily to persons who have the future to reckon with rather than the past, may be found in the parable of the ten young women who one evening went out to the edge of the little town in which they lived, to meet and welcome a wedding party. It was a common custom for the young friends of the bride to go out with lighted lamps to escort the newly wedded pair to the bridegroom's home, after the conventional visit had been made to the ancestral house of the bride.

In the parable the wedding procession is delayed. The young women who composed the reception escort grew weary of waiting, and fell asleep. At midnight the belated bridal party arrived. Of the ten lamps which had been alight earlier in the evening, only five were still

equipped to offer welcome. And these lighted lamps were in the hands of the foresighted, who had provided themselves with extra oil to insure against just such an emergency as had arisen.

It may be assumed that each of the five foolish virgins realized, before she started from home, that while she was prepared to fulfil her obligation, provided there was no delay in the arrival of the party, she would be seriously embarrassed in the event of any tardiness on the part of the bridegroom. It may also be imagined that each of these foolish five, in considering the possibility of such an emergency, reflected that even if there were a delay, all the others would have had enough forethought to bring additional oil with them. She could borrow from them; or, if it came to the worst, the failure of one lamp would hardly be noticed. There would be nine effectively doing business. She would keep along with the others, and attend the feast, anyway.

Doubtless the world would be able to extend more generosity than it does to the unprepared, if only one person out of ten faced life carrying a dead lamp. The fact that fully fifty per cent are unequipped to meet their problems, for lack of adequate preparation, makes society more exacting in its attitude toward the failures. Doubtless, if any one of the unfortunate virgins in the parable had suspected that instead of being the only delinquent, and probably to be

promptly pardoned—with a little good-natured chaffing, maybe—she was to become a member of a definite class, composed of half the people of her generation, who would bring chagrin upon themselves and perplexity to everybody, she would have gone prepared.

What other excuses these foolish virgins may have given to themselves, before starting with an insufficient supply of oil, can only be imagined. Jesus does not attempt to analyze their minds. He draws the picture in elemental strokes, and leaves all matters of incident and detail to be supplied by the auditor and reader. In passing, it should be said that all of the Galilean's parables are constructed in this manner. They are only the outlines of stories, which leave opportunity for the recipient to adapt them to his own need and fill in the missing pieces of the picture from his own imagination and experience.

A little thinking on the problems of the foolish virgins evolves certain possible situations somewhat as follows: We may suppose that one of these young women considered her lamp as a mere emblem of welcome. If it was lighted, so much the better. If it was out, it would still stand for welcome. In her opinion, the lamp was the thing—not the light. Lamps had a very interesting tradition. They were emblematic of learning; they graced the altars of religion; they were found in kings' houses; they

were carried in processions. It was better if they were lighted; but they were lamps still, even if they were dead and cold. In other words, this particular young woman felt that to go through the motions of doing something important and meritorious was as good, in the long run, as actually doing it. Even a dead lamp, in her hand, would certify that her intent was right. But for this unforeseen emergency she, too, would be carrying a lighted lamp. She was not responsible for the emergency. If anybody was to blame for her plight, it was the tardy bridegroom.

All of these excuses may have seemed valid to the young woman who conceived them. Doubtless she felt seriously aggrieved because they did not seem as good to others as to her. The fact remains that she was not admitted to the feast. In a last-minute effort to repair her blunder, she hurried, with her hapless companions, to the market-place, hoping with no faith that some shopkeeper might be about at midnight. When she returned to the home of the host, the door was shut. She called. They all called. But the merrymakers did not hear them.

Undoubtedly it could be shown that most people who face life unprepared can explain their failure on the ground that they had thought one needs only to be of good intent. They had thought that going through the motions would be all that their generation would

require. They had thought that the lamp was more important than the flame.

It is conceivable that some other member of this unsuccessful group, in the parable, permitted her æstheticism to get in the way of her efficiency. She was willing to carry a lamp, because the lamp was beautiful. She declined to carry the oil-jug, however, which would provide for emergencies. Whatever may be said in behalf of the beautiful and artistic things of life, there is something also to be said for the prosaic. A deal of dull drudgery usually accompanies one on any serious quest of a worth-while ambition. Our world is quite overstocked with people who might be useful if they had not magnified the æsthetic interests of life out of all proportion to the practical considerations involved in honest work.

Another foolish virgin may have determined that her interest in this event was worth a certain amount—so much for her gown, so much for her veil, so much for her slippers, and so much for oil. She was a thrifty person, operating her affairs on the budget system. She would devote a given sum to this enterprise—and not one farthing more. Later she discovered that it was a mere farthing's worth of oil that would have given her a victory instead of a defeat. All about us are people who are willing to invest a certain amount of energy, time, and interest in a task; but no more. Perhaps one additional

stroke of the pick would have touched ore; another day of working faithfully at the minor position would have brought a promotion; another mile of plodding along would have brought the city in sight. They have not possessed the vision to keep on investing themselves, in the hope of reward. Fatigue overcame them, and they dropped the pick, losing all their labor with success almost in their grasp. They resigned from the dull task, after a long grind of drudgery, just on the eve of advancement. They felt the journey was a fool's errand, after a long and tiresome pilgrimage, and turned back when they were all but within sight of their destination.

Perhaps another of these foolish virgins, when cautioned by her family that she would better take extra oil along, replied that she felt sure there would be no delay that night. She knew these people. They were punctual. No; nothing like that would happen this time. Many persons have a notion that while other people may be confronted with emergencies, they, themselves, are looked after by a special providence. They can take any leap and the angels will have charge concerning them. They hope to be lucky. When they are refused admittance to the feast, they explain it on the ground that luck was against them.

It may be supposed that the fifth young woman of this foolish group had no reason to offer at all for her failure to take extra oil along.

She was not an æsthete. It would not have bothered her pride to carry a jug. She was not a sacramentarian, to whom an extinguished lamp was as good as a lighted lamp, seeing that all the value the lamp had, anyway, was emblematic and symbolic. She was not thrifty. The price of surplus oil which she might not be called upon to use did not figure in her calculations. She was not an opportunist, gambling with Fate to shield her from emergencies. Indeed, she was so lacking in optimism that she had a presentiment there would be a delay that night. But all the others would be prepared. She would slip in unobtrusively, and her delinquency would be soon forgotten. Her lamp would be out; but, even so, she would contrive to enter the banquet-room. The host would be considerate. He would say: "Oh, well, let her in!" There can be no question but many people face life in exactly this mood. They hope to be carried along on the current. They expect to enter without a pass. There will be but one unlighted lamp. It will be theirs. But the incident will be overlooked. The host will merely smile. And surely one could always borrow.

When it came to the moment of crisis, however, the foolish virgins, although well fortified with excuses and explanations, began to realize that there was only one fact at issue. They were out of oil. Oil was the thing that night; not lamps, however beautiful or emblematic; not

thrift or luck or impudence—but oil! They asked the wise for a loan. The wise prudently figured that if they divided their oil in half, instead of escorting the party into town with only five lighted lamps—which was bad enough—they took chances of arriving at the bridegroom's house with all the lamps extinguished.

So the foolish went to buy at midnight. It was a foolish thing to do, but they were foolish and they hurried to the market. The wise went in to the feast, and the door was shut. It was not shut with a bang. The guests did not relish the idea of their friends being left outside; but there was nothing they could do about it. The door was shut; regretfully we hope; but—shut!

II

Another of the parables addressed to the adolescent who has life before him pictures opportunity as a feast offered by a king. Here we have, also, a wedding, a dinner, and a problem relating to the guests. The prince was to be married. There was to be an imposing affair to which only the blue-blooded and full-pedigreed of the neighboring principalities were invited. At the last minute, when the feast was practically on the table, the royal host began to receive couriers bearing the regrets of his invited guests. He was enraged. He sent his servants out to the four corners to ask in anybody and

everybody. They obeyed. Presently the king saw them coming—a miscellaneous aggregation of rags and tatters—and he was in great perplexity. Even to avenge himself on his aristocratic friends, who had treated him so badly, he could not admit these people to his banquet-hall in such poor array. He bade his servants gather up all the cast-off court finery and provide his tatterdemalion guests with garb fitting the occasion. All was going nicely. The proletariat accepted the garments, and passed into the dining-room. But presently a guest appeared who, when graciously tendered a robe, declined to wear it. He had been asked in, just as he was; and they could take him as he was or throw him out. So they threw him out.

Of course, the problem at issue in the parable concerned the democratic tendency of Jesus' "kingdom." We must not linger long over the history of that problem, for our business with the little story is to investigate its application to our present life. Very briefly: the Israelites considered themselves a religious aristocracy. Within that aristocracy there were many mutually contemptuous castes and sects. Throughout the long ages of the Hebrew nation it had been believed and taught that Jehovah was chiefly concerned with the self-admittedly "chosen people." Now a new revelation of The Absolute was being disclosed through the ministry of Jesus. The religious aristocracy had

spurned this feast. Consequently, the doors had been thrown open to everybody. But these new guests were to understand that they must not enter upon this surprising privilege minus a sense of the honor conferred upon them. Merely because the aristocracy had declined to attend the great supper of the king, it would not be permitted the rank and file to treat the event with indifference. They would be furnished with attire suitable to a king's house, and they must wear that attire with as much credit to themselves and the king as lay within their humble capacities. That was the meaning of the parable for the people who first heard it spoken.

For us it presents the same lesson, although the circumstances in which we find ourselves are somewhat different. Under the direct influence of Christian civilization the doors to the Palace of Opportunity have been thrown open to the multitude. It is only a little while since the privileges of education, positions of trust and honor, public recognition, and social advancement were restricted to a minority who realized them mostly through inheritance. The liberating power of Christianity, manifested in the rise of democracy and a more equable distribution of human rights, brought a new type of guest into the banquet-hall of privilege. But the tattered guest, until lately unrecognized, must not enter upon this feast disdainfully. While it is true that he has not been asked to

assume responsibilities commensurate to the high distinction offered him, he may not with impunity decline to do at least the small honor to this occasion implied by the acceptance of a "wedding garment."

Perhaps it would be imposing somewhat upon this parable to read into it an admonition to the ragged and heedless crew, gathered from the ends of the earth, that jostles and pushes to-day in the vestibule of our own country, where the liberating power of Christian altruism has been brought to the finest demonstration ever made of that principle in this world. Perhaps it would be asking this parable to lend itself to a situation too far afield from its original purpose, to suggest that these lately invited guests, at the feast of democratic liberty, should at least assume the outward symbols of appreciation. But no man who has watched, with growing anxiety, the greedy assumption of these privileges on the part of so many persons hitherto unaccustomed to any estate beyond penury, rags, vermin, and vice, but utterly indifferent to the slightest obligation that such acceptance of privilege naturally entails, can read this parable without wishing it might be printed, in red ink and large letters, in the seventy-six tongues and dialects now heard about the festal board of our world-famed liberties, for the edification of those who decline to wear the garments courteously furnished by their host.

In the parable it was not left to the ragged, grimy guest to say whether or not he would do this little to honor the event. The man who was all for his privileges and not at all for his responsibilities was promptly excused from further participation. No long-drawn-out trial was conducted in his case. His own attitude condemned him. He was asked why he had refused to comply with so small a request, and he had no reply to offer. So they threw him out.

Obviously, when a royal feast is thrown open to the fourth estate, certain safeguards must be established to prevent the abuse of this liberty; and, unless such safeguards are erected, the feast cannot very long be continued with honor or success. Doubtless one takes the risk, here, of seeming to regard with disfavor the arrival of new guests at the feast. We, who may consider ourselves as servants in this Palace of Opportunity, are to receive graciously and gladly the polyglot and somewhat bewildered multitude that approaches the open door from every point of the compass. It is the Master's will that every man should have his rightful chance at life. We, who have anything whatsoever to do with this feast spread with the new liberties wherein a Christian civilization has made us free, are to welcome the arriving guests and offer them the garments which symbolize a willingness to accept these benefits with a becoming gratitude. But it is also part of our task

to see to it that the guests put these garments on! Only thus may we insure the perpetuity of that feast!

Viewing this parable from a slightly different angle, we find in it a mine of practical counsel to present-day youth. Our high schools, colleges, and universities to-day are gorged to suffocation with hundreds of thousands of young men and women who labor under the impression that attendance at an institution of higher learning is a guarantee of prosperity, success, and honor. Only a small percent comparatively ever realize their ambition. The large majority of them are pitched out of the Palace of Opportunity without trial or ceremony. Mostly they come to this humiliating disaster by way of their refusal to wear a "wedding garment." They are eager enough, apparently, to attend the feast; but reluctant to do it honor.

No perplexity in modern life is more menacing than this spectacle of thousands who are expected to be the leaders of our civilization within the next two decades, nonchalantly sitting at the festal board of educational privilege with the curled lip of contempt, frankly and shamelessly working for marks and credits, scornful of the few who exhibit any eagerness to do their work with joy, and denouncing them as "greasy grinds."

The memorization of this parable might very well be made an entrance requirement for freshmen in American colleges; and if, somewhere in

the formal declarations of the senior's diploma there could occur the significant words "Many are called, but few are chosen," the phrase might have a sobering effect upon the innumerable host that marches forth every June, suffering of the obsession that a college degree is a patent of greatness.

In the face of society's present bewilderment and grave need of adequate leadership, any youth who crowds himself into the congested district of large privilege dares not accept these benefits with an air of indifference. In this welter of conflicting motives, when the very air is vibrant with the raucous demands of the irresponsible who are eventually to die in debt (unaware of it and unashamed of it) to a civilization whose problems they had multiplied, it surely behooves the young men and women who think of themselves as potential leaders to approach their trust with consecration.

By circumstances which have borne them along, almost without their having moved hand or foot to advance themselves, many young people of our day have come to this focal point of privilege where their election into the minority-who-succeed seems impending. Many of them have given no thought at all to the gravity of their position. One sees them come and go, in our institutions of higher learning, gay, carefree, apparently anxious to be out of college and into the racket for the sole purpose of getting

what they can, as rapidly as possible, at a minimum cost of effort. Not infrequently they enter upon the active affairs of their lives absolutely unstirred, sluggish, freighted with knowledge which, in another's hands, might have enriched his world, but in their keep a total loss! Let them make no mistake about the nature of the honor conferred upon them; for the candidates for success and failure, in every graduating class, are related numerically, almost as people are thus related on a crowded street!

Occasionally in some high moment one beholds a stirring drama wherein some dynamic soul, half-blinded by a sudden flare of light on his Damascus road, acknowledges his mistaken belief, kneels to accept a larger trust, shoulders his burden of responsibility, and starts off with it proudly. These are infrequent experiences, for the ample reason that such events are the portion of the few. We must find our hope in these occasional elevations of youth into the estate of potential greatness. It is true that although many are called, few are chosen; but so long as even a few are chosen, and know that they are chosen, and conduct themselves as becomes the chosen, civilization is secure.

III

The young man who would inquire into the teachings of Jesus, which were directed, pri-

marily, toward the heart of youth, can hardly fail to be stirred—if these parables mean anything to him at all—by studying the charge delivered by the Man of Galilee to the two juniors who belonged to his group of disciples.

This story demands careful perusal. Its message is not to be had at the price of a casual reading. It is essentially intended for the adolescent. It appeals to the spirit of adventure which is the particular property of youth.

Early in Jesus' ministry John and James, brothers, had become attached to his company, probably attracted to the Master because he, too, was youthful and in love with nature. His interest in birds and flowers, field and stream, made him easy for youth to follow. True, there was the shadow of eventual tragedy hovering over him, but it had not depressed him. That tragedy was to be part of his vocation. He had accepted it without a whimper or a protest.

That John and James were normal youths, impetuous, radical, careless of consequences, and inclined to be boisterous, may be implied by the fact that they had been nicknamed "The Boanerges," meaning "sons of impulse." Doubtless these young fellows had followed mostly for the sake of this rare companionship which they found in Jesus. They may have sensed his errand in part. It must have been a matter of some satisfaction to them to be associated with a movement promotive of human welfare. But

it may have been more or less of a lark with them. The fact that at night they had nowhere to lay their heads, and must camp under the stars, was no hardship. Perhaps they enjoyed it. It did not distress them that they were often hungry and required to exercise considerable ingenuity to find enough to eat. They were soldiers of fortune. And it may have been because of this youthful buoyancy, optimism, and freedom from care that their Master loved them so dearly and apparently saw so much more of them than of the majority of their colleagues. But, notwithstanding they had received special attention and had entered so intimately into the life of their leader, these Boanerges had never been awakened to the gravity of the position into which they had come by virtue of his large investment in them.

The circumstances of their awakening were intensely dramatic. It was only a few days before the tragedy that was to make a wooden cross the everlasting sign of supreme altruistic endeavor. There had been a short vacation tour, and now the little company was en route to the capital to participate in the celebration of a national feast. Huge crowds would be there. The presence of this influential Galilean would excite attention. The priesthood, already committed to the belief that the safety of their formal religion demanded his death, would be greatly annoyed by his popularity with the

home-coming pilgrims. Doubtless the end was in sight. So, he told his friends, as they walked, that if they had questions to ask or requests to make, this was the time. There was no telling what might happen upon their arrival in Jerusalem.

It is at this juncture that the sons of impulse rise to the occasion with a somewhat startling request. With all the naïveté of youth, they unashamedly asked for special seats to be reserved for them in Jesus' ultimate kingdom. They had at least this much warrant for their presumption: they had been given special attention here; there seemed no reason why they should not be singled out for such honors in the mysterious afterwhile. Perhaps it did not occur to them that their request was in such bad taste, proposed, as it was, in the presence of others who had been quite as loyal, though without so much recognition. Indeed, the main trouble with their attitude was exactly this: they had accustomed themselves to take quite too much for granted in their acceptance of special privileges.

Said they, with bland assurance: "Grant that we may sit, the one on thy right and the other on thy left, in thy glory." Their Master instantly said, in substance: "That distinction is not mine to confer. There will be places of preferment there, but they will be assigned by our Father. I have nothing to do with that matter.

But, had I that responsibility, by what right do you ask for such honors? I am now en route to voluntary tragedy. I shall be handed a cup of pain and grief, and I mean to drain that cup to its last bitter dregs! What have you done, what will you do, what can you do, to entitle you to a seat at my side?"

At this point we customarily lose our way to the heart of this story. We see only the annoying fact that these young men, of whom we had thought so highly, have committed an almost unpardonable impertinence. We notice the dark looks on the faces of the other disciples. They are shaking their heads and muttering their serious disapproval. But the real story does not lie in that quarter—granting that these young men were impudent and selfish and disregardful of other people's feelings. The real story resides in the fact that they were challenged! There was no taunt in the voice that uttered this gripping query: "Are ye able to drink of my cup?"—but there was a dare in it that stirred them to their depths; and, instantly, unreservedly, they answered: "We are able!"

The awakening had come! These impetuous youths, shaking themselves loose from the lethargy that had clung to them until now, suddenly seeing their masterful friend's heroism in a new light, and their own obligation to carry on if they were to justify his love for them, accepted his challenge! And the Master, no less stirred

than they, recognized their consecration with the significant words: "Then ye shall, indeed, drink of my cup." He knew that whoever in this company might falter when the time came for risky deeds, John and James would prove their valor. And they did.

Are ye able?—that is the question. Some people are not able. To fail in a test like that would be no disgrace at all, were it proposed to the great mass who have not been trained to think in terms of self-surrender. It would have been the wrong kind of an appeal to make to the rigid, conservative, unadventurous mind of maturity. It may be doubted if Jesus would have thrown down that challenge at the feet of old Zebedee, their father. But he knew the spirit of youth, and he challenged them.

It is not beyond belief that he is still disposed to challenge our right to the privileges we have accepted with such ease. Of course, he would not challenge just anybody. But if the youth who has become conscious of his responsibility to civilization listens attentively, he may hear the equivalent of Jesus' challenge to the Boanerges. "You have become the legatee of a bequest more rich than you can imagine," declares the voice. "You hope that future days will bring you honor and preferment, by way of your exceptional privileges. By what right do you indulge that hope? In what degree, and how, and why, are you entitled to distinctions which the

majority may not have? Are ye able to drink of my cup?"

Not often in the course of a lifetime is a man brought face to face with a searching query that grips and shakes him to the very foundations of his soul. But when that moment comes he should stand in awe of its ultimate consequences. His decision may determine the value of his whole life and the nature of his immortality.

CHAPTER IV

"TO HIM THAT KNOCKETH"

NOTHING is more definitely set forth in the sayings of Jesus than his conviction that men should make heavy demands of life. Any successful quest, he declared, must begin with faith. Mountains could be removed by faith. No adventure was possible without it, and any adventure would achieve reward by way of it.

A few of the parables intended to inspire the courage necessary to bombard life for its essential benefits contain a hint of kindly humor—an interesting sidelight on the mind of the Master. The fact that he was a man acquainted with grief must not mislead us into the belief that he lacked the capacity to appreciate a droll situation. Persons who suspect that to predicate of Jesus a sense of humor is an act of irreverence, should reflect that the absence of this faculty would have made him of sub-normal mind. Any one who can read without a smile the story of the poor widow in her dealings with the unjust judge is seriously lacking in imagination.

This widow sought the aid of a judge, hoping for a decision which would relieve her of the oppression put upon her by an adversary. The

parable does not state the nature of this oppression. The adversary may have been a cruel landlord, or an extortionate usurer who had lent the woman some money. But, whatever offense he had committed against her, she wished to be avenged. The judge was frankly disinterested in her case, and told her so. He went further, and assured her that she had no case. She was to go her way and make no more efforts to enlist his support.

The next day she was back in his office, monotonously rehearsing her story again, quite as if it were her first appearance there. The judge impatiently broke her off in the middle of a long sentence, and told her, with much firmness, that she must stop. He had passed upon her case. It was a closed incident, so far as he was concerned.

Next morning the judicial chambers had been no more than opened when the widow arrived, making no loud complaint, but insistent upon telling her story. And the judge, in considerable exasperation, put her out, and warned her against a return.

After that, for a long time, the days were all alike in that every morning brought the poor widow to the judge's office. She became his most steady and perplexing customer. And at length she wore him out. One day, when he felt he had endured all he could stand from that quarter, he told her to begin at the beginning

and tell him all about it, which she did, gladly and fully; and when she was through, he said: "You have no case. You have been appealing solely to sentiment. I am not a sentimental person. You have asked me to do something about this 'for God's sake,' and I do not believe in God. You have suggested that I act in this matter for humanitarian reasons. I am not a philanthropist. But I have become so weary of seeing you here, that I shall, and hereby do, avenge you of your adversary."

If there was not a merry smile on the faces of Jesus' auditors when he told that story, it must have been a very dull crowd. Perhaps it was because they enjoyed it so much that he told another in the same vein.

Unexpected guests had arrived at midnight. Hospitable inquiry disclosed the fact that the belated arrivals had missed their supper. Further domestic investigation revealed that there was no bread in the house. The next-door neighbors were appealed to. The anxious host went to their door and knocked repeatedly. Presently a muffled voice asked him what he wanted, and he told his story. They were in an awkward dilemma at his house. Hungry guests and no bread.

The neighbors told him he would have to solve his problem without their assistance. They were all in bed. They did not wish to be disturbed. Would he kindly go away? He would

not. He considered them his best chance that night; so he stayed at the door and continued to set forth the seriousness of his predicament until they decided that the only course left to them, if they were to get any sleep that night, was to accommodate him. They groped their way to the kitchen, found the bread, opened the door wide enough to put it through, and the borrower returned home, happy that his hospitality might now be offered without apologies.

And if it were true that by unquenchable perseverance one might secure a favorable decision from a callous judge and an accommodation from a selfish neighbor, how much more hopefully one might make requests of one's Father! What human parent, if his child asked for bread, would give him a stone; or, if he asked for a fish, would give him a serpent? If we have not, it is because we ask not! This was Jesus' firm belief in respect to men's demands of God. We are committing no impertinence, or irreverence, by laying siege, through faith and prayer, for the larger benefits.

If one may estimate the attitude of Christ toward great adventures of faith by the fact that most of the adventures and the greatest of the adventures have been made by men propelled by his spirit, it is to be believed that he has the warmest admiration for men who set out to do the impossible; for investigators who are willing to keep on, undaunted by discouragement, un-

til they find what they seek. "He that putteth his hand to the plough," said Jesus, "and turneth back, is not worthy of me." This statement is easily understood when one remembers how diligently, and at what mighty cost, this Galilean teacher applied himself to his life's ambition. He, too, had made heavy demands of God. When it became apparent that to achieve his goal he must consent to be hung high upon a cross, he declared: "If I be lifted up, I shall draw all men unto me!" That was a large promise. It was predicated upon a tremendous demand which he proposed to make upon his Father. He could not deliver to the world a legacy like that unless destiny delivered to him an extraordinary opportunity and an unprecedented experience.

Nothing was more real and practicable, in the opinion of Jesus, than the results of sincere and persistent prayer; but a man must not ask for power to perform trivial acts or gratify merely selfish desires. No matter how strong his faith, he must not try to turn stones into bread to assuage his own hunger. He must make no faith-leaps from the pinnacle of a temple to surprise an audience into respect for his trust in Providence. People who make large requests of God must have better reasons for their prayer than a desire to find increased physical comfort, relief from heavy obligations, or satisfaction for their vanities.

II

Along with his advice to "launch out into the deep" under the propulsion of faith, Jesus cautions against any mere dickering with destiny, whereby one promises a definite amount of labor in consideration of a specific reward. The adventurer-by-faith is to understand, at the outset, that he is not working for wages.

This does not mean that a man may not definitely bargain with life—promising to pay every instalment on time, and with high expectation of a commensurate recompense. There can be no question about Jesus' own attitude toward a fixed goal of endeavor. He knew exactly what he wanted to do. He knew the price attached to that achievement. He was able and willing to pay it. To the pursuance of that goal, all minor attractions gave precedence.

In his own case life would be brief. He was aware of his necessity to make every minute count at its full value of sixty seconds. This urge, however, was held in admirable balance by an utter freedom from that sense of hurry which dissipates energy and produces mental dishevelment. Alongside the fact that he wasted no words; advised that conversation should never descend to commonplace tittle-tattle; squandered no time; and conserved every energy—alongside the fact of his complete absorp-

tion in his important life-work – there is no record that anybody ever saw him running; nobody ever heard him say that he was harassed with the fear that he might not accomplish everything he had set out to do; nobody ever saw him out of breath, or distracted, or stampeded by the heavy exactions of his own programme.

Doubtless this is to be accounted for on the ground of his absolute trust in the guidance of his Father. That consciousness steadied him through all circumstances. When the storm broke over little Galilee, on the night when he and his disciples were effecting a laborious crossing, the Master slept. His friends were at their wits' end; racing futilely from one end of the boat to the other, tugging at ropes, fumbling with sails, in a panic of fear. Jesus slept. He was in his Father's world. That world was in the grip of strange elemental forces; but they were physical forces which had no sovereignty over the larger affairs of the spirit. The spirit was the only thing that really mattered. One may suppose that the complete confidence of Jesus in this principle of guidance was never disclosed more perfectly in any recorded experience of the Master's life than in the ineffable calmness of his repose through the shrieking blasts of a tempest that had hurled his disciples into a pandemonium of fear.

Of course, there are many illustrations of this incomparable poise with which he moved about

serenely among the fear-harried men of an age steeped in superstition and honeycombed with all manner of strange phobias. There is a decided thrill in the story which pictures Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, coolly facing a mob with an instinctive courage which made these men stand baffled in his presence until he quietly informed them to proceed with their task. But we dare not make too much of this scene, in an attempt to arrive at the uniqueness of Jesus' poise, for there are many tales of courage, predicated of men of lesser breed, who walked into danger for duty's sake, unwhimperingly and with steady stride. We must put this down to the credit of a conscious courage which, in moments of emergency, when both principle and pride are on trial, is often exhibited by men whom stern circumstance has put into tight places.

But there is a uniqueness in the manner of courage that may be called unconscious, resident in the subliminal self; an automatic, built-in courage that responds to tests as unhesitatingly as the physical hand withdraws, by reflex neural action, when accidentally encountering a flame. Jesus sleeps through the storm! His subconscious mind was utterly free of fear. It was free of fear because of his unreserved trust in his Father's protection. This must have been the secret of his poise. This may explain why, in the midst of circumstances which would have

shaken a man of smaller capacity, he retains his grasp upon this impenetrable tranquillity.

It will be important for us to realize the significance of this mental attribute of Jesus; for, as has been indicated, it was found in combination with his unswerving pursuance of a fixed goal, which he knew he must reach in a period of time tragically brief. In other words, he was not simply drifting with the tide! Coupled with this sense of trust in Providence, went a resolute ambition to perform his appointed work. But he knew that his Father would permit no physical danger to frustrate the performance of his life-task. There was no storm at sea, no pang of desert hunger, no risk of safety, no threat of violence able to interfere with the full outworking of that mission.

Only Jesus himself ever knew to its fullest ecstasy the peculiar type of joy afforded by that consciousness of insurance. He tried to communicate it to his disciples. It was his hope that they, too, might lay hold upon that joy which no man could ever take away from them. It was to him "the more abundant life." And when he glances about him at the mental estate of men who, although possessed of large erudition, or popularity, or material wealth, but completely undermined with fears, comparing their restlessness, uncertainty, and apparent harassment with the tranquillity he had found, it is small wonder that he gazes upon the things of

life, which moth and rust and thieves destroy, with a quiet indifference we are quite unable to comprehend.

Now, one may presumably understand a temperament like that, based upon a mystical resignation to life's vicissitudes, sitting supinely waiting, with a Brahministic "go-by-mad-world" attitude toward all natural human engagements. The Hindoo does it, and does it well. But Jesus did not find this calmness by sequestration in some inaccessible corner where, undisturbed and unidentified with active life, he might take solitary counsel of his own well-disciplined soul. Herein lies the mystery of the Jesus mind. He lived that manner of life in the very ruck of contumely, criticism, rebuffs, taunts, and threats, on the part of his foes, and cowardice, selfishness, and petulance on the part of the group to whom he was presently to entrust his message. Jesus sought no cloistral cell; no monastic insularity against the turbulent world. Neither was he a mere bystander, smiling, patiently and patronizingly, over the futilities of men's strenuous endeavor. He knew the problems of vine-growing, wheat-raising, tree-pruning, brick-making, and the prosaic details of domestic duty in the house. He knew the problems of wages, taxes, and the perplexities of citizenship under a provincial government. He was no impractical visionary. But, whatever may have been the versatility of his interests,

he, himself, was in pursuit of a fixed goal. He was not hurried toward it. He was not worried about it. But he was going in that direction with majestic strides, and an indomitable will that would not be deflected from the path he had charted for his journey.

Jesus tried to communicate this unswerving sense of direction to his disciples. Once a man had begun a thing, he should see it through! Whatever reluctance or timidity he expected to display should be considered, and settled with, before setting forth upon the adventure. A young rabbi who, in an impetuous moment, announced that he was prepared to follow, anywhere, was cautioned that the retinue of the Man of Galilee frequently slept out under the open sky. "Count the cost," is the message of many a parable. The king with ten thousand troops must not rush into battle with the king who has twenty thousand. The ambitious tower-builder must count his brick before making the excavation.

Nor is this advice restricted to the aspiration to achieve celestial reward, but to any and all of life's worthy endeavors. Before you set forth upon an adventure, decide whether you have the capacity, courage, and patience to see it through to the end. But—and here is the evident solution to the Jesus type of propulsion—once having decided to do the thing, then do it! Once you have determined upon a worth-

while goal, consider no obstacle in your path too formidable to be overcome!

It is at this point that most of life's unsuccessfulness may be explained. Many persons have occasional surges of desire to achieve important gains. They are overswept with tidal waves of desire to be and do something great. They make New Year resolutions and birthday commitments, and voluntarily assume valorous vows under the emotional lift and drive of some personality who has momentarily galvanized them into the semblance of courage. They impute to themselves a spiritual capacity they do not possess and an intrepidity they cannot maintain.

Jesus was in favor of a man's staking off a claim for his life, consistent to his capacity, and then working that claim for all it was worth. One may imagine, as a typical case, the ambition of some well-favored youth who had determined, at the age of ten, that he would become a surgeon. He has not arrived at this decision on some cheap basis, such as that he would have easy access in this profession to an enviable position in his social group, or live unhampered by the tyranny of bells and whistles summoning him to work. He is motivated by a desire to render service.

Whatever force endeavors to cross his path from the age of ten until he draws the drapery of his couch about him at seventy, that would deflect, retard, or distract him in his steady

drive toward that fixed goal, is obliged to wait, like palpitating traffic facing a "Stop" signal on a congested corner. As a little lad he will not read his book, no matter how interesting, unless the light is properly adjusted, for he dares not risk eye-strain. He will not play baseball, for he cannot take chances on a stiff knuckle. He laboriously practises on the piano, which he despises, for the sole purpose of winning dexterity with his fingers. No narcotic, however apparently innocuous, ever comes into his experience, because he insists upon absolute nerve-control. Invitations to dissipation and adventure involving hazard of accident are always spurned, but not without some heroism. It is difficult for him to withstand the taunts of his playmates and the criticism of his elders, who may interpret his self-sacrifices on the ground of cowardice or assumed superiority.

But people can tease and revile and misunderstand and even punish; he goes forward toward his goal! He is going to be a surgeon. He is going to be the best surgeon that his strength, talent, courage, and capacity will permit. He falls in love; but he cannot marry until the term of his professional training and the long interneship is over. The young woman forces him to decide whether his profession is more important than she is. He decides in favor of his profession. That, too, in the face of the fact that he loves the girl. But his life-work is

something that takes instant and constant precedence over anything and everything that may arise in his experience! He has put his hand to the plough; and he will neither turn back, nor look back, nor think back, until he has seen his furrow through!

If all men had this kind of motivation, or if any considerable number of men were driven by this type of propulsion, we would have sighted Utopia long ago.

John records of Jesus: "He must needs go through Samaria." We are not told why; and, maybe, if we knew why, we might consider the reason relatively unimportant. But it was not unimportant to Jesus. He must needs go through Samaria, albeit that was not the usual way to travel from the town he had just left to the town he expected to reach. Whatever he did, and wherever he went, there was a "must-needs" motive back of it.

He is driven forward, but not on the run. He has time to talk to fishermen about their catch. He has time to notice little children. He has time to saunter down to the Pool of Bethesda, and talk to a cripple. He is not so self-absorbed that he cannot identify Nathaniel under the fig-tree. Even when on trial for his life he is more interested in finding out what Pilate privately thinks of him and his cause, than in his own acquittal. Nothing escapes his notice—the beauty of the flowers; changing

clouds; a little man, astride the limb of a tree, waiting for him to pass; the inscription on a penny; the fidelity of a dog—but nothing deflected him from his goal. He saw everything, and was turned aside by nothing!

His life-work was completed only at that moment when he bowed his head and murmured: "It is finished." So often our life's programme is too short, too small, too lean. We outlive it. We finish it, and have years left on our hands, without employment. Jesus' programme and his days were of equal length. He and it were brought to a crisis together. It was a glorious way to live; it was a glorious way to die. "'What wilt thou?' quoth God. 'Pay for it, and take it!'"

III

Notwithstanding the importance of starting early and concentrating upon a definite goal, in the belief that absolute devotion to one's calling will justify the sacrifice and labor involved, Jesus wants all the ambitious and industrious to understand that if they knock at life's door perseveringly and make heavy demands of destiny they must take what they get and be satisfied.

Abraham of old, believing in a Promised Land somewhere, was willing to start, not knowing whither he went. He found the Promised Land,

and the story was handed down to his posterity. Many another man has set forth, with no more indefinite destination than that, and has found nothing.

Jesus was in favor of the planned life, the life that knew where it was headed. But the man who deliberately made demands of life was to keep his bargain. If other people, at the end of the journey, seemed to have as much as he, there must be no complaint. If others had acquired a great deal more than he, of desirable possessions for which he had not bargained, he must not whine. If he strikes a bargain with life, to see him on to a fixed goal, in consideration of hard service, he must be satisfied. If it brings him honor but leaves him poor, he must be content. If it lifts him where he can draw all men unto him, but demands that this eminence shall be a cross, he must take the consequences!

Perhaps the fullest exposition of this principle in the teachings of Jesus occurs in his parable of the laborers in the vineyard, to which we must now turn. It is a parable that cannot be understood at all, unless one knows the exact circumstances under which it was spoken.

A rich young nobleman had come inquiring about the conditions of everlasting life in Jesus' new spiritual commonwealth. He wished to be assured of the eternal persistence of his soul. This was his highest demand of destiny, and he eagerly sought the terms.

In an effort to discover by what route his young acquaintance had already attempted to realize this promise, Jesus induced him to expound his creed and divulge his ethical programme.

It was found that this rich young man had diligently kept all the laws from his youth up. Indeed, he had not contented himself with obedience to the Mosaic decalogue, but had graduated from the cold austerity of those "thou shalt nots" into the warmer atmosphere of "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And upon the conclusion of this examination, Jesus said: "If thou wilt be perfect——"

Here was a very large contract! Jesus frequently felicitated people upon their faith adventures; but only once, so far as the record informs us, do we find him telling a man he lacked only one point of perfection. "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, distribute it to the poor; then come and follow me."

One surmises that we are not expected to understand, from Jesus' statement to this young man, that all capital to be rightly used must be distributed among the poor. No sound system of economics would ever sanction a course like that. Were this to become a general practice throughout organized society (which is extremely unlikely), there would be a temporary elation felt by the poor, who would rejoice in a few days of unearned and unaccustomed pros-

perity. Having been ever denied the luxuries of their superiors in material possessions, they would probably run the whole gamut of extravagance briefly, pauperizing themselves magnificently into the temporary gratification of hitherto suppressed desires, and generating new appetites for the stimulants of pleasure and the narcotics of leisure—appetites not long to be appeased by a rapidly depleting fortune. Employment agencies are always of more permanent value to the poor than bread-lines and soup-kitchens.

Jesus never advocated any topsy-turvy scheme of filling the hands of idleness with undeserved wealth, to the impoverishment of the capitalistic forces which provide the rank and file with an opportunity to earn an honest wage at self-respecting labor. How frequently do his parables revolve about some central figure of wealth and influence who makes it possible for other men to live. How vigorously he pleads for loyalty and industry and the investment of heart-interest in the labor men perform for wages.

In the specific case of this young nobleman, however, Jesus needed and wanted him as a personal friend and follower. Here was a splendid type of conservative, cultured, law-abiding, spiritually aspiring manhood. But the Master knew that the rich ruler would never be able to fit himself into the nomadic life of his poverty-

stricken crew of Galilean fishermen until and unless he had put himself into a position to understand their circumstances and share them. Jesus wanted his new friend to come and follow; but he could not advise it if the recruit expected to come with every pocket full of gold. If the new gospel was to have a chance in this world, it would have to begin its work with the common people. The young nobleman would have to let go of his fortune. This he was unwilling to do.

There was no caustic comment made upon his refusal to comply. Perhaps he thought his reasons for declining were good. It is possible he may have thought—may have said—that a distribution of his fortune to the children of indigence would throw many honest wage-earners, who looked to him for their daily bread, out into the ranks of the beggars. It may be he honestly felt that it was his duty to conserve his estate.

Viewing his problem from this distance, it is easy to see how large a mistake he made. In the light of history, there was nothing this young man could ever have done with his money nearly so important as to give it away, that he might make common cause with this little company and march with them into a deathless glory. But at the moment he could not make that decision. He turned away sadly, and the Master watched him go, also heavy of heart.

Every eye in the little company of disciples was focussed on the leader's serious face. They knew he was disappointed. They wondered if he had overlooked the fact that they had given up their all. Peter, as usual, becomes spokesman for the company. Peter remarks of himself and his friends that they had made this very sacrifice which the young ruler had been unable to render. One smiles over the wide disparity between the extent of Peter's estate and the wealth of the nobleman. One remembers the boat that Peter had drawn up on the beach, in the neighborhood of Capernaum, and the oars in that boat and the old bailing-bucket and the mended seine. Peter had left all and followed.

But whoever had left anything, however little or much, to espouse the new cause, would receive his reward, here and hereafter. Jesus declared it, with solemn conviction. And then, apropos of his thesis, he told a story, as follows:

The owner of a vineyard, at the harvest season, when there was much work to be done quickly, went out in the early morning into the market-place to hire laborers. He found some men there who had come to the market-place for this purpose. He asked them if they would work that day in his vineyard, and they said they would. The price would be one denarius, they declared. The price was high, but he agreed with them. He did not quarrel with them. There was no argument. He agreed. (The word

in the original from which "agreed" is derived is also the word which, in the form of a noun, became the parent of our word "symphony.") He "harmonized himself with them for one denarius." And they went to work in the vineyard.

But there was much to do that day in the vineyard, and these industrious, albeit high-priced, laborers would be unable to do it all. So at nine o'clock the owner of the vineyard went into the market-place again and found men standing there idle. He asked them if they would like to work in his vineyard, and they assented. He told them he would give them whatever their services were worth to him. They considered the proposition fair enough, and went to work.

Again at noon, and at three, and at five, he went to the market-place, and secured additional help. In none of these cases did the idle men attempt to dicker over a wage. He assured them that he would pay what was right, and they were satisfied that he would be fair with them.

When the day's work was done, the laborers all filed out through the gate. The last to come were the first to go. To their surprise and delight, each man—no matter when he had begun to work—received one denarius. Came now the dickerers of the early morning, self-conscious of their fatigue. It is quite possible that during the day they had loosely organized themselves into

a little exclusive caste of their own. They were the Hard Workers. All day long, at intervals, new crews had been coming into the vineyard—people who were so unprofessional that they had not so much as inquired what wage they were to receive, much less striven to drive a shrewd bargain. Doubtless the Hard Workers did a great deal of talking among themselves that day about the length of their arduous toil as compared with the care-free attitude of the casuals.

And so, as they stood by the gate in the evening, very ostentatiously mopping their steaming faces with their sleeves and heaving mighty sighs indicative of great weariness, watching these various groups of late-comers receiving, every man, one denarius, they thought they should have more. But they had driven a bargain for a definite reward. They had not left it to the owner of the vineyard to say what he thought they ought to receive. They had engaged for one denarius; and, when they passed the wicket, that is what they got. They complained bitterly.

Perhaps Jesus glanced at Simon Peter, at this point of the story, to make sure it was registering. It would be good for the fisherman's soul. So—went on the speaker—the Hard Workers complained. They had borne the burden and the heat of the day, and here they were being paid exactly the same wages as the casual labor-

ers, some of whom had come so late as an hour before sundown.

"But did you not agree with me," asked the owner of the vineyard, "for one denarius? Did you not say that this was your price? Did you not make this as a demand, and have I not complied with your demand?" They admitted this to be true. "Then," said he, "take what is thine and go."

It is beyond thought that Jesus intended us to believe that society would be just as well off to loaf all day, and stroll into the market-place about 5.00 P. M., wondering if some benevolent person might invite these nonchalant idlers to work for an hour, with assurance of a whole day's day. The lesson does not lie in that quarter at all.

Obviously, what the Master was intending to teach to his disciples was the fact that if one makes heavy demands of life, and promises to pay for exceptional privileges by assuming extraordinary responsibilities, then one must be content with the bargain. Jesus does not denounce the man who hammers at the doors of life until they open to him. Indeed, his admiration and approbation are tendered to the man who makes a definite programme of life in advance and consecrates himself to its fulfilment. But if it should so happen that certain other people, who have taken their cares less seriously, are able at the close of the day to exhibit

about as much in apparent happiness, influence, and the intangibles of a successful career, we who have bargained are to take our wages and go our way, without jealousy or petulance or an air of having unduly martyred ourselves.

For there is, unfortunately, a distinct "martyr" type, people who resolutely set out to bear the burden and the heat of the day. They do a great deal of talking about how heavy the baskets are and how hot the sun is in the vineyard. They either consciously or unconsciously organize themselves into the Ancient Order of the Hard Workers. They make hard work of their philanthropies, and sometimes turn their finest deeds into lugubrious farces. They give the impression that whoever else picks grapes in the vineyard is an impostor. They live desperate lives, leaping, watch in hand, from committee-meeting to conference-luncheon, which they feel obliged to leave, before the dessert is served, to be in at the session of the commission to outline a new budget. They are, indeed, bearing the burden and heat of the day, and nobody knows it quite so well or talks of it so freely as they themselves.

Jesus was not disowning his disciples. He was not belittling their sacrifices. He is appreciative of all the honest and industrious toil his friends, then and now, invest in his vineyard, just so we do not, at the end of the day, or at any time during the day, go into high revolt because other

people, who were content to take life as it came, receive, every man of them, one denarius.

He pleads with us, who esteem ourselves his disciples, to cultivate such magnitude of mind that we, although we may have borne the burden and heat of the day, can be sincerely glad that the casuals are treated generously.

CHAPTER V

"UNTO WHOMSOEVER MUCH IS GIVEN"

THE potter in Keramos chanted at his wheel: "Some must follow, and some command, though all be made of clay." But the problem of relative human capacities is not quite so simple as that, though it might seem so to a potter.

In respect to their co-ordinated abilities and responsibilities, men cannot be grouped into commanders and followers. Spiritual biology would recognize a vast array of species, as regards humanity's efforts in the world, and these species are not to be categoried under less than three main genera: namely, the driven, the led, and the commissioned.

Our thought just now will centre at the point of Jesus' admonitions to the last of these groups, but we cannot well consider the case of the commissioned until we have had a hasty glance at the others—the driven, first, who comprise the large majority of all people who on earth do dwell.

No optimistic expectation need ever be had of the driven. The fatuous statistics of sentimentality may endeavor to prove that if any

considerable number of these persons were to invest, each of them, his one talent, even at so little as three per cent, with a usurer, civilization would presently be sighting the suburbs of the City Delectable. But so few of the single talents ever function in behalf of the general estate belonging to the social commonwealth of souls, that the carrying charge on this account is infinitely larger than the feeble interest accruing therefrom.

The members of this huge majority trudge along dully, at their best when doing exactly what they are told to do by their betters; stolid, except when reacting to urges directed at their undisciplined emotions; silent, except when made temporarily articulate by discontentment; a great, unassorted, miscellaneous multitude, to be viewed always with compassion and frequently with some anxiety.

These are the driven, to whom not very much has been given, and of whom not very much is required or expected. Felicitations are extended them, not in consideration of great valor or notable achievement, but on the strength of their having been able to operate, even feebly, under their own steam. When we applaud them, it is because they have contrived to keep out of the almshouse or the reformatory, and have not actually become an economic liability to society.

The second group—not nearly so strong numerically, but thrice as strong, every other way

considered, can be led; not unthinkingly, as sheep are led—but led. They adapt and apply the discoveries, inventions, and inspirations of their leaders to the practical work of the world, to which obligation they are faithful in varying degrees, according to their capacity. And civilization would be in poor case without them. Doubtless it could be shown that the real hope of human society rests heavier upon them than we have thought; and it may be believed that if as large a relative percentage of the class presently to be mentioned were to accept their larger trust with as much doglike fidelity to duty as the led, the Golden Days would be listed in the almanac a great deal sooner than appears at the present hour.

Moreover, the faithfulness of the led is not always or often rewarded as conspicuously as might be. Sometimes they earn as much as one hundred per cent on the investment of their two talents in the same length of time that their superiors are earning no more than that with two and a half times as much capital; but, when the bonus is issued, the five-talent people always get it. Of course, that "bonus" is not so much a dividend as an assessment, for it represents the unused potentiality of the driven, and is, therefore, more of a problem than a perquisite. But, whatever it is, it is passed out as a reward of merit, and the led do not get it. All we are concerned with now, however, is a fleeting glimpse

of the led—a hard-working, well-meaning, modestly equipped, approximately honest, relatively decent group, who can be persuaded to do almost anything within their range of possibility. Sometimes they do very destructive things. It depends upon the character of their leadership. But that, too, is another story. It should be said in their behalf, however, that the led do not follow very long the leader who takes them into mischief, for the economic effects of such a course soon speak for themselves more loudly than the noisy call of any charlatan and more impressively than the flamboyant advertisement of any quack.

Now there is a third group, which we are to be thinking of as the commissioned—a group so few in numbers, comparatively, that it hardly counts at all in the census or at the polls—a distinct genus composed of eager, kinetic, creative souls, who cannot be driven and cannot be led very far or very long; whose hearts are reached more often by challenge than persuasion; a group made up of persons who have become conscious of their appointment to a trusteeship in the estate of civilization. They are sensible of operating under higher orders than mere temporal government and local law. They are aware that everything they have and are and will to be is leased to them; held in trust; not goods to be possessed, but an estate to be administered. These are the commissioned.

II

In a former chapter we were thinking of the triumphant climax of his life who went willingly to the cross, convinced that his kingdom would henceforth be a lifting, drawing, driving energy. Outward appearances were against the ultimate success of his cause that day; but he knew that he had finished his work, that he had set in motion certain forces which would continue, self-restoratively, to work until the end of time!

But all this faith of Jesus was predicated upon his firm belief that he could depend upon a few chosen people in every generation, who could and would become custodians of that power. They would be specially favored people—not necessarily rich in material property, though rags would be no recommendation nor thriftlessness a credential to this office; not necessarily rich in erudition, though any inexcusable ignorance would immediately disbar; not many mighty, in their own esteem or the public's acclaim, would be called; not the born-to-it by the will of flesh and blood, but by the irresistible urge of the spirit.

Neither would the mere capacity to serve as a trustee of civilization commission a man unless he were fully willing; and no mere willingness would suffice unless he were also able. On the day that Jesus was crucified, he could not

number many who were properly equipped to serve in this capacity; but there were some. There were enough. One would have been enough. He knew of eleven. By the time they were ready to meet in formal conference, to plan for the furtherance of the cause, there were one hundred and twenty.

One of the most important features of Jesus' ministry was to make a test of men's ability to serve as trustees of the estate he was presently to leave in the hands of a little potential minority. In most cases they failed in their examination. We have already seen the testing of the rich young ruler. It may be remarked in passing that there are very good reasons for believing that this young nobleman was no other than Joseph of Arimathæa. We do not pause to cite these reasons. Whoever is interested in attempting to verify this claim can easily find access to the data on the point.

If it may be assumed that this identification of the rich young ruler is correct, Joseph of Arimathæa had a chance that day to go on record with a decision which would have made his fame deathless; but he was unable.

Pilate had a chance to go down in history alongside Paul. There was one little moment, on the strategic forenoon when that burly Roman was serving in the joint capacity of judge and attorney for the defense, in the case of The People vs. Jesus of Nazareth, when he had an

opportunity to hand his story over to the poets and painters for all time. There was a moment when a certain decision might have made Pontius Pilate the kind of a name that is written only with a mallet and chisel. But Pilate was unable!

Nicodemus ben Gorion, eminent lawyer, had a chance to give himself a choice immortality by conceding the supremacy of the reign of love over the reign of law; but was unable!

True, when it was all done and a strange constraint had fallen upon that city, and the clamorous crowd had dissolved into little groups of nervous men, Joseph lends his new tomb, which he had built to provide his body with a mockery of the perpetuity he had been unable to secure for his soul; and Nicodemus acts as a pall-bearer; and Pilate, urged to change the placard on the cross—the irony of which was belatedly considered too subtle for the crowd—to "He said he was the king," waved them all away with impatience, shouting: "I have written 'He was a king.' It is enough! Let be! He was a king!"

Ah, yes; but however regretfully these men of apparently large capacity, judged by their official positions, their sagacity in business, and the extent of their material holdings—however regretfully they contemplated the tragedy of one who held life cheaper than duty, when it had come to the actual test of their ability to

rise to their full stature, at the moment of his greatest need, they were unable.

So the immediate responsibility for the development of the great ideal was bequeathed to a little group of unlettered fishermen and small farmers. But into their hands the founder willingly committed this trust, involving a valor priced at martyrdom; which makes us wonder what manner of spiritual meat they had fed upon to empower these lowly men with such audacious courage.

The problem clears somewhat as we take reckoning of the fundamental difference between the teaching that Jesus offered to the vast majority and the intensive character of his talks with these future trustees. It has already been hinted in a previous chapter that such distinction was to be observed, and to this matter we now direct our attention. We will not endeavor to call the roll of all the parables, distinguishing between the type of admonition presented to the multitude and the more exacting counsel to the disciples; but a few examples will suffice to make this distinction clear. Whoever finds this a fruitful study may continue the investigation with profit and increasing conviction that our thesis is correct.

III

The parable of the Good Samaritan was spoken before a general audience of all sorts. A man did not have to be conscious of a trusteeship in civilization to understand a simple act of neighborliness, even if that service involved some risk of personal safety. The crowd could and did see the point of it.

It was before a throng so large that they actually trod upon one another that Jesus told the story of the man who had stacked up enough provisions to last him here forever; who, having announced to his soul that he could now take his ease, was hurriedly ushered out into the dark, alone and naked and afraid, with empty hands.

All the publicans and sinners were out on the day that Jesus delivered the parable of the Prodigal Son. Here was something they could understand. That was a very interesting day in the ministry of the Master. Not only were the publicans and sinners well represented, but the scribes and Pharisees were there also, in large numbers—the latter passing much unfavorable comment on the fact that so many disreputables seemed to find the young prophet congenial and his words comforting. This led Jesus to discourse upon the general principles of reclamation.

A man had lost one of his hundred sheep, and had sought it until he found it. A woman had lost one of the ten little silver medals off her wedding-bracelet, and had hunted for it until she found it. A father had lost his boy, and had waited, patiently and hopefully, until he returned. And when he returned, the boy's elder brother, righteous, frugal, conservative, and self-admittedly perfect, staged an embarrassing scene for the household because the tattered tourist had been decently received. They knew —these Pharisees—what he meant and whose case was being treated.

That must have been a great afternoon for the disciples. The lost had been admonished to come back, while they were still able to travel; and the disciples were not lost. The Pharisees had been vigorously excoriated for their ungenerous self-righteousness, and the disciples were not Pharisees. It is easy to imagine Peter saying to John, as the crowd breaks up, that of all the sermons he had ever heard Jesus preach, this was the best one!

When they were all gone away, Jesus drew his little group of disciples about him and delivered a parable intended wholly and solely for them, and for those who in the future would accept commissions as trustees of civilization's estate.

This is not to be a simple story of neighborliness. This will not be anything like the tale of

the selfish rich man, surrounded by crowded barns, adapting Omar's philosophy to his corn-fed soul. Neither is this the same sort of a parable as the tale of the Sower, who went forth scattering seed almost anywhere—on the ploughed ground, in the fence-corners, over the highway, in the brambles—hoping it would grow and never coming back to see if it did. This will not be that kind of a story.

This parable is meant for the minority—the trustees—the people who are expected to keep aglow the perpetual light; men and women who own nothing, but have had large holdings leased to them. You are now to hear that story, and if you are of the potential minority to whom much has been given and of whom much shall be required, but have grown weary of your obligation or have lost interest in your commission, *I promise it will bring the sweat out on you!*

A certain absentee landlord had entrusted the local operation of his estate to an agent. Upon his return from an extended trip it was reported to this capitalist that his agent was crooked. Said the rumor: "Your steward is wasting your goods."

So he called the steward in and said to him: "What is this that I hear about you? Prepare me a statement of all the transactions you have made in my name; and then you may consider yourself discharged!"

The steward was in sore straits. His was not

the kind of a position from which one might step easily into another place of equal importance, especially without a certified character. It was not a mere job, from which, having been discharged, a man might present his time-ticket at the cashier's window, take his $17.30, and fare forth in quest of another job of similar insignificance. His position was that of a trusted steward. He could not be a steward at all, unless he could be trusted; and he could not be trusted. Said he desperately to himself: "What shall I do? I cannot dig, and I am ashamed to beg!" So this was what he did. He called in all the debtors to the estate one by one, and made them *participes criminis* with him in his defalcation, incidentally placing them under a certain guilty obligation to himself. Later they must befriend him, or he will expose them!

To the first debtor who appeared on summons he inquired: "How much do you owe our lord?"

"A thousand gallons of oil," replied the man.

"We will call that five hundred," whispered the steward, with a significant smile. Another debtor arrived.

"How much do you owe our lord?" queried the retiring steward.

"Fifteen hundred bushels of wheat," the man answered.

"You may discount the bill twenty per cent!"

Presently the capitalist heard of these trans-

actions also, called his defaulting steward in, and, having informed him that he knew all about it, remarked quietly: "You have done very well! You have acted wisely!"

One hears people saying that of all the subtle parables this one is the most difficult to understand. But it is easy enough when it falls into the hands of the people for whom it was intended. When any one of the innumerable "debtors" to the estate, who have no consciousness of responsibility for the administration of its affairs, reads this parable, it startles him. He thinks there has been a misprint in the text. He wonders if—somewhere along the long line of tradition—there has not been an incorrect translation. Here, he says, a steward has proved himself a defaulter; and, on the eve of handing over his keys, he makes a host of other people accomplices in his felony; and the owner of the estate remarks, when he hears of it: "You have done very well. You have acted wisely." There must be something the matter with this story, comments the common debtor.

No; there is nothing the matter with this story! The commissioned trustee knows what it means! Between the lines and flaring from these quiet words, he sees the blistering irony of an indictment that fairly sears his soul! No loudly shouted rebuke, no frenzied denunciation could ever bring him up to a gasping standstill, pale and terrified, as do these calm, judicial

words: "You have done well. You have acted wisely." You have lost your position as a steward, and you cannot be anything else than a steward; so all that is left for you is to get what you can, while you can, where you can, and however you can—for what you are getting now is all there will be for you—ever!

The common debtor can come back, in a repentant mood, and say: "Here is the rest of that wheat. I am sorry!" Or: "Here is the balance of that oil, and please forgive me!" But when the commissioned, who had been honored with a trusteeship, who had tasted of the heavenly gift, who had been given custody over a sacred trust which must be conveyed from one generation to the next—a trust far too important to be left without absolute insurance—when he, the commissioned, loses his position, he is all through!

"You have done well," said the Certain Rich Man. "You have lost the only place in the world that you were intended to occupy. Only a few hours remain for you on these premises. You would better get what you can—quickly! Fill your pockets! Take the cash and let the credit go!"

Doubtless, on the occasion of the ultimate calling of the loan, many a member of the commissioned minority will be asked some difficult questions.

"Here is one item of goods which we have

marked as charged out to you," says the Certain Rich Man, "on which we have had no report. Perhaps you will recall the incident. A bright, promising young fellow was pointed out to you; just graduated from college, he was without a nickel. Nobody in all his family connection able to lend him a dollar. He had taken his pre-medical course, hoping to become a physician. You knew he could not work his way through a professional school, as he had done in college. You had a chance to help him to his training, by investing in him a loan of a very small part of the property that had been leased to you for just such business.

"Had you done it, you would still be in the world and at work through him, probably accomplishing more than you ever achieved by direct action while you were there. Every time he restored a broken unit of humanity and put it back into constructive service, that would have been you—you, dead, yet speaking! That opportunity was leased to you, along with the capacity for accepting it. You let the chance go by. The youth was forced back into the ranks to work with borrowed tools he was never meant to use. You had his tools! You were the trustee of his tools—holding them in trust for him! They were my goods! You wasted my goods!

"And here is another item charged out to you. There was a certain man in your employ, you remember, who one day made a serious mis-

take that caused you much annoyance and some financial loss. In the heat of your irritation you turned him out without a recommendation or a chance to square himself. You never inquired what became of him, did you? Well, you had an opportunity that day to re-create a soul; not merely to put it back where it was, but to make it all over—stronger, finer!

"Curiously enough, the very blunder he committed furnished the machinery of your chance to rebuild him on a larger scale. Up to that hour you had not known each other very well. You were his chief. He was your subordinate. You gave orders. He carried them out. But he was only a common debtor to civilization and you were a steward. How greatly he was influenced by your personality you never knew. But that influence was an item of leased property. It was goods.

"He blundered. You threw him out. You had a chance to make him over into something fine, and you shoved him down to defeat, cynicism, and despair. That opportunity to set him going toward a higher goal than he ever could have reached but for that experience was goods! It was real goods—as real as a bank, or a mine, or a mill! It was my goods! You wasted my goods!"

And what does all this mean, in the parable, about the steward discounting bills during the last hours of his tenure of office? Perfectly simple, again, when read by the commissioned.

When a man has been a trustee and, through failure to keep the faith, has lost his position, it always annoys him to see other people discharging their obligations to society. He begins to discount men's bills, owed to their common employer, and payable to civilization in the coin of altruistic service. He finds himself saying to his neighbor: "What's that? You mean to say that you are paying the salary of a doctor in China—all by yourself? Why, surely, that is more than your share!"

To another he remarks: "I think you are doing yourself an injustice, carrying that sick man's expenses. He was only in your employ for a month. You are under no legal obligation. You've paid more than enough on that already!"

Again we hear him saying: "You certainly are allowing yourself to be imposed upon. Last year you were giving two nights a week to the Boy Scouts, and here I see in the paper that you have just been elected to an exacting office on the directorate of the Y. M. C. A. You would do better to give yourself a little more leisure for recreation!"

This is the very worst feature of the retiring steward. He is not content with flunking it, himself. He wants all the debtors sharing his delinquency. He thinks it will help to bridge the gap between his morality and theirs. Having failed to fulfil his trust, he falls back upon the whimper that too much had been expected of

him; that too much was expected of everybody; that the Certain Rich Man is too exacting.

That manner of talk is always to be expected from certain quarters. The one-talent man can be depended upon to arrive, on the day of accounting, dragging his spade sullenly, and handing over his unused responsibility with a whine that his employer was a hard man; but one has a right to hope for better things from a high-powered steward!

At length the rascally steward is called to task, but not noisily. We suspect we are to hear about an arrest, a trial, much sensational testimony, a conviction, and a long sentence. But of all this—nothing. "You have acted wisely," declares the Certain Rich Man. For when a man has lost the only place he is destined to hold, he may be pardoned for picking up all the little trinkets he can find—and loading his pockets—and making friends guiltily with his inferiors, seeing there is no place for a deposed steward to go!

This was the manner of spiritual diet that made Jesus' disciples ready to go to Rome, and become "a spectacle unto the universe" through the recklessness with which they tossed their lives away for the sake of his cause. And this counsel is still offered to those who are conscious of their commission as trustees of civilization—stewards of the spiritual estate.

CHAPTER VI

"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM"

AS has been observed, Jesus of Nazareth did not narrowly and fanatically restrict life's activities to a mystical contemplation of metaphysical matters. So intimately associated was he with the joyousness of his friends that a wedding feast became the happier because he was a guest. And when he would not accept an invitation which did not also include his humble fishermen friends, they were invited, too.

Indeed, there was so little of desire for monastic seclusion in the programme of the Man of Galilee that the priests charged him with being a glutton and a wine-bibber. This was a stock phrase which the ascetic customarily applied to any one of gregarious disposition. Had it carried a more personal indictment than that, Jesus would doubtless have resented and refuted it, as he might easily have done in all truth.

We have seen his interest in men's vocational concerns, his counsel relative to the industry and loyalty of the employee, and his hope that every man would so invest his capacities that he could be happy and effective in whatever work he had chosen to do.

But all these things—vocations, avocations,

recreations—important as they were to a well-rounded life, must give precedence to a certain quest which he denominated "the search for the kingdom of God."

There was nothing new about this pursuit. It had been going on all through the ages. Jesus' concern about it focussed upon the point of making it a more practical endeavor. Humanity had always clamored for larger information relative to the affairs of the spirit. Instinctively it understood that there were undiscovered secrets in the grip of Deity, and longed to know them. Early Hebraic lore pictures a Jehovah on guard against the impertinence of the inquiring human mind. The angel, defending with a flaming sword the gate of Eden, lest the expatriated Adam might return and eat of the tree of deathlessness, indicates the thought of those ancient seers in respect to mankind's ambition to possess larger spiritual power. Not much later Jehovah is represented as descending, upon the Plains of Shinar, to confuse the plans of men who hoped to invade his throne by way of brick and mortar. In the patriarchal days Jacob is reported as having wrestled with an angel; and when, crippled painfully, he appeared to have lost his battle, Jacob held tightly to his celestial antagonist, shouting: "Except thou bless me, I will not let thee go!"

Nothing is clearer, throughout the spiritual pilgrimage of the people who provided the racial

background of the men with whom Jesus walked and talked, than the fact of that unremitting search for heavenly light. If one may be privileged to read between the lines of that engaging story inseparably associated with the Nativity —the arrival of the wise men from the East— one views that caravan as having come down through the ages, gropingly at first, then more confidently and with more certain light, accumulating the riches of an increasingly precious spiritual experience, until it drew up before the humble stable-door, in little Bethlehem, and deposited its treasure at the feet of him who was to take them up, transfigure them, and bequeath them to the world.

No; there was nothing new about the quest that Jesus urged. His contribution to it was vested in his hope to make it more attractive and attainable for the average man. It had been in the keep of prophets and priests. There had come to be too many commissioners, middlemen, and interpreters blocking the way between the layman and God. The woman at Jacob's well had stated the case quite nicely, as it appeared to the lay mind. The Jews had God localized to the temple in Jerusalem; the Samaritans had Him limited to a sacred grove on a certain hilltop. Jesus remarked that the time would come—if, indeed, it had not come already —when men, realizing that God is a spirit, would not be content with seeking Him in any

humanly manufactured trysting place, however venerable. Once, passing the temple, a disciple commented upon the beauty of its masonry, and Jesus, although well aware of the architectural grandeur of that edifice, remarked that these stones would presently be levelled.

Persons disposed to consider this statement as a prediction of the temple's actual physical destruction, which occurred not many years afterward, have fair ground for their belief; but may one not suspect there was a deeper meaning than this in Jesus' words? For he hoped and believed that the days of building high and thick and beautiful walls around God would soon be over. Jesus was interested in corporate worship. He approved the synagogue, attended it, preached in it. He loved the temple and held it in reverence. But, somehow, the spirit of God must be released and made more readily accessible to the individual mind.

If men were to understand this important fact, they must be made aware of the real nature of "the kingdom of God." To the conventional Hebrew it was something that had been. The temple stood for it. The temple was filled with the relics and memorabilia of a triumphant past in which Jehovah had wrought many wonders for a favored race. "Lo, there is the kingdom!" declaimed the type that sought history for his spiritual satisfaction. New cults, led by ambitious reformers, struggled for a hearing, their

advocates shouting: "Lo, here is the kingdom!" But, according to Jesus, this "kingdom" was neither something that had come to pass and gone to crystal, nor something that was to be seen in the offing as a general cure-all of their social, moral, and political problems. "The kingdom of God is within you!" said he. That was new! The quest for the kingdom was old. Men had always been at it. But nobody had ever said before that the kingdom was so easily found that the individual did not have to look outside his own soul for it. The kingdom is either now and here, or it is nowhere and never!

There are many parables in which Jesus tried to make clear the various facts about this kingdom. It will be interesting to view closely a small group of them which deal with the importance of making this quest of the kingdom the supreme passion of life. However eager a man might be to succeed and be happy, in his pursuit of "the things" which made existence pleasant, his search for the kingdom would insure his possessing whatever he required to enrich and ennoble his life. Too much was being made of the trivialities—food, clothing, houses, rugs, jewels. Thieves menaced the jewels, moth menaced the rugs, rust devoured the precious ornaments of metal; and as for clothing—well, the lilies of the field, unconcerned about spinning, were better dressed than Solomon (who still symbolized the last word in matters sartorial).

People were giving themselves over to a lifelong scramble for things that had no essential values, whereas, if they only knew it, they might possess an abiding joy, which no man could ever take away. How ardently Jesus wished that he might communicate his belief to his friends! How ingeniously he wrought the pictures through which he attempted to show them the ineffable beauty of this "kingdom."

II

Nobody may have the story of the pearl-trader at the price of a single reading. It is not quite so simple as that. Because it is so extremely brief, one suspects that it is easily understood. This is a mistake. Its brevity should only serve as a warning that it requires more study than it might if it were replete with incident. Simply stated, there was a pearl-merchant. He dealt only in fine pearls. Whenever he heard of a particularly valuable pearl, he went to see it. If it suited him, he added it to his collection. This was no mere passing fad with this man. It was his business! He traded in pearls. One of the most important tasks of the pearl-trader, then and now, is in matching them. He made up strands. He would exchange with other men of his profession, to their mutual advantage. One day he heard of a very fine pearl, which was reported to be the most valua-

ble in existence. He went to see it, recognized its uniqueness, and resolved to buy it. He asked its price, and the owner told him he might have it in exchange for his entire stock of pearls! So, because he was a dealer in fine pearls, and had now found the finest pearl on earth, he emptied his jewel-cases of everything they contained and bought the pearl. It was only one; but it was *the* one! He now lost interest in collecting pearls. They all seemed quite futile and worthless. For he had found The Pearl of Great Price!

It is to be suspected that many readers of this story may have missed the point of it. They have given most of their attention to the size and beauty and desirability of this wonderful pearl. All other pearls pale into insignificance in its presence. Nobody who had seen this pearl would ever afterward appreciate the beauty of any other pearl. Granted—all these thoughts; but that is not what this story is about. This was "the pearl of great price"! It is the "great price" that constitutes the uniqueness of this jewel. Quite effectually does this parable dispose of the widely accepted slogan "Salvation is free!" Apparently Jesus did not hold it at that figure.

An active imagination finds in this story an abundance of material for speculation. Before one begins thinking about this extraordinary pearl which the merchant eventually possessed, at such great cost, one wants to spend a little

time figuring on the nature of the pearls he already owned. He must have thought very highly of them. Indeed, he had to think very highly of them, or the matter of turning them all in, as the purchase price of this ultimate pearl, becomes an affair of no importance. What were they like—these other cherished pearls? Where had he found them? What had they cost him?

If we may be permitted to do some guessing, let us suppose that this merchant had found one of his most valuable pearls in Athens—headquarters and rendezvous of philosophy. Perhaps he thought of it as his metaphysical pearl. Perhaps it symbolized the search for truth after the manner in which Athens quested it. We may suppose that during his stay in Athens this merchant had observed that some philosophers believed one's best course to pretend utter indifference to life; others had decided to get what pleasure they could out of it, seeing it was brief. Most of the thinkers had taken their pick of these programmes—either to stand, arms folded and lips pursed, contemptuously, watching the gay procession pass, hilariously intent upon superficial pleasures, or join the procession and affect gaiety.

There were some, however, who, realizing the difficulties in the way of espousing and practising either of these cults consistently, declared they did not know anything about the riddle of

life. They doubted if any one knew. The whole of it—the search for Deity, the search for reality, the search for truth, the search for the highest good—all was an unsolved and insoluble riddle. These people frankly proclaimed that they did not know. They called themselves agnostics. Perhaps our merchant was an agnostic. That was what his Athenian pearl meant to him—agnosticism.

Now that would not be easy to give up. Once a man has proclaimed himself an agnostic, it is by no means a simple matter to disavow his empty creed. His God-questing neighbors are either horrified by his hazardous position, which serves to distinguish him as a person of remarkable courage and audacity—a rôle at once flattering and dignifying—or regard him with the utmost solicitude, and attempt to rescue him from his perilous predicament—an implied tribute to the unusual value of his jeopardized soul.

When a man has earned a reputation for agnosticism, he customarily becomes more vainglorious over his distinction than he might be over the invention of a new labor-saving device or the discovery of a cure for some ancient disease. Many a young student in college, misinformed before he goes there, that all scientific men are agnostics, assumes that he is nothing less or else than that. Sometimes he begins to affect the agnostic mood immediately upon his purchase of the little green cap which denotes

his membership in the Freshman Class. As soon as he has learned how to light a Bunsen burner in the laboratory he decides that the energy of the electron is sufficient to account for the universe. Learning that the human race has registered a slow progression through the ages, he assumes that all this advancement was wrought by a process of "blind necessity." It is quite as reasonable to suppose that a pile of lumber and a load of brick might, by blind necessity, coordinate themselves into a nice little six-room bungalow!

But, having become an agnostic, the youth finds it increasingly difficult to detach himself from his theory. He likes the attention it draws to himself. He enjoys both the pity and the reproach vouchsafed him at home when he airs his beliefs at Christmas holidays. There's many an agnostic who would gladly relinquish his absurd position if he might do so at a smaller sacrifice of his vanity.

Perhaps the merchant in the parable possessed a pearl like that. It was not easy to let it go. But—and surely this was a high tribute to his magnanimity of mind—when he had gazed upon the ultimate pearl and realized that to possess it he must let the Athenian jewel go, he was ready to meet the I-told-you-sos of his pious neighbors, some of whom had been much more careful of their metaphysics than their morality, and the we-knew-you-would-come-to-its of un-

tutored folk whose intellectual life was bounded by the local gossip of the community. He knew that he would automatically catalogue himself, in the opinion of his agnostic cronies, alongside the noisy enemies of mental enlightenment.

If, then, we would really find out how valuable was the "Kingdom Pearl," we must take reckoning of the value of those pearls which had to be given up! Perhaps one of the pearls had been found in Rome—where law and justice boasted of themselves. It may easily be believed that this pearl had become very important in the merchant's esteem. He believed in law and justice. It was not wise to encourage too much sentimentality in the ordering of human affairs. The Golden Rule, for example—there was a sentimental proposition, an impracticable measure, finding no sanction in the ways of Nature. Charity was forever handing crutches to people who ought to be taught to walk. Compassion was enervating. Pity was ruinous. Sympathy only made for indigence, delinquency, and retrogression on the part of those to whom such solicitude was shown. He was for justice. Let every man keep the law. It would be hard to turn in a pearl like that, seeing how stoutly he had contended against any belief that made an appeal to the heart.

Perhaps another of these cherished pearls had been picked up in Phœnicia—the great commercial centre. This stood for success, as men de-

termined success, in terms of money and the things that money may procure. It was to be observed that men of large material possessions always spoke in a tone of higher authority than poor men. They were relieved of drudgery, and thus enabled to give more attention to the things that made life beautiful and enjoyable. It was not easy to turn in the Phœnician pearl.

But when this merchant saw the unearthly sheen of the most wonderful pearl in all the world, he gave up all. He had taken much pride in his former possessions, but this pearl was worth the entire stock!

Some one, dreaming over this parable, may have a moment of wondering why Jesus chose the pearl as the jewel of this story. At a superficial glance one might decide that the Master mentions the pearl here in exactly the same manner with which he could as easily have employed the diamond or the ruby. He wanted to speak of a jewel, and arbitrarily chose the pearl for no better reason than he might have chosen the emerald.

Second thought decides that this is incorrect. He could not have used the diamond, for the diamond achieves its value in the cutting. The Kingdom is all in one piece. Cut it and you lose it! Neither could he speak, in this connection, of the ruby or the emerald, for reasons presently shown. Of course, these other gems taught their

separate lessons, but they were not true examples of the Kingdom.

In the ancient tombs along the Nile, Egyptologists find emeralds of great value and in large quantities, verifying the old tradition that such gems were significant of immortality and possessed of magical powers to lengthen the life-term. The amethyst was confidently believed to preserve the wearer from evil desires. Even so late as the fifteenth century amethysts were worn for this purpose, and wrought many an undoubtable work of grace for their owners. It is better not to scoff at this. Who shall say that the high-minded young man, who had sacrificed many a pleasure to purchase an amethyst, to insure himself against evil thoughts, failed to be helped thereby? True; it might not have done him much good if he had been given the amethyst by his anxious parents. But if it had cost him something of value and if he had bought it for the express purpose of insuring his moral integrity, whoever doubts its real value as a safeguard against evil only announces his ignorance of psychology.

Jesus doubtless knew all these stories about emeralds and amethysts; and if he is simply searching for a precious stone to introduce into his story, what would better serve his purpose than these? Or the ruby, of which Solomon had said that only wisdom was more precious? But the Kingdom was like unto a pearl.

It is interesting to note that the glory of the pearl is not intrinsic. Its sheen is invested in it by the beholding eye. The ruby and emerald possess intrinsic values, by virtue of their peculiar stain. The value of the pearl resides in its iridescence, and this iridescence is an optical phenomenon, due to interference with rays of light refracted from microscopically small corrugations of the surface. Whatever iridescent sheen glows on the pearl is there because the individual sees it there! In sober truth, the glory of the pearl is not in the pearl at all! It is but light, strangely stratiated and refracted upon the beholder's lens. In and of itself, the pearl can do nothing for the individual except to serve as a vehicle for the refraction of light.

Possibly this may be made more clear by another figure: Suppose a man buys membership in a gymnasium class—twenty-five lessons for twenty-five dollars. This will renew his vitality. What will renew his vitality—the tickets? No; he might frame the tickets in gold and wear them about his neck and sleep with them under his pillow; but they will never benefit him in the least, until he goes and takes that exercise!

The Kingdom of Heaven is like the pearl. It has just as much irradiating value as the individual puts into it through the capacity of his own sight. If he happens to be astigmatized, so that the angles of incidence in his retina are

out of harmony, he can see the beauty of the emerald or the ruby, whose dominant attribute is color; or the diamond, whose function is simple reflection; but he can never hope to realize the glory of the pearl, because that is a matter of extremely exacting refraction.

If it be thought that we are attributing to Jesus certain knowledge of otology to which he had no access in his generation, it will be well for us to remember the frequent use he made of the optical conditions under which men see clearly. "The organ of light in the body," said Jesus, "is the eye. If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Again we find him saying: "If thine eye be single" (by which he meant capable of normal reactions) "thy whole body shall be full of light. If thine eye be impaired, thy body shall be full of distorted images." Being able to see the Kingdom—that was the point! It requires a trained eye, unimpaired by too much steady concentration upon the gaudy effects and garish phenomena of a world pledged to interest in transient form and color; unwarped by deep-seated prejudices that forbid one's bringing the Kingdom into ocular focus! The Kingdom is a pearl of great beauty, provided one has eyes to see it.

In the light of these facts, we begin to understand the inner meaning of this parable of the pearl. Further contemplation of this illustration

repays one for the effort. There is a sense, for example, in which the pearl is a distinct product of pain. Some irritating energy comes into the experience of the mollusk, and the victim secretes a peculiar fluid which envelops the thing that otherwise would have destroyed its life. Pearl-divers do not look for large, fine-looking shells. They search for the irregularly shaped mollusks that seem to have been undergoing serious vicissitudes. It is under such circumstances that pearls grow. Doubtless it could be shown that at the heart of every worth-while blessing in the world there is a primary motivation of suffering. It is not inconsistent that Jesus' Kingdom should have built itself upon a tragedy—the greatest of all tragedies—and thus have likened itself unto a pearl—the pearl of great price.

III

In the parable of the hidden treasure, which, because of its extreme brevity in close association with other more extended parables, has lacked the full attention it so richly deserves, Jesus seizes upon a tremendously appealing theme as an effective vehicle for conveying information concerning the Kingdom.

"Hidden treasure!" What a phrase to conjure with! Confide these words to whomsoever you will—sage or savage, sinner or saint, graybeard or schoolboy—and instantly you have

his attention. Doubtless it is the hope of discovery that constitutes the main eagerness of life. No man need ever think himself old so long as he is stirred to quick interest by a hint of something to be disclosed. It is this quest of things hidden that keeps us keyed up to concert pitch, as we endeavor to play our part in the symphony of life; and whenever existence has become flat and stale—as it does, undeniably, for many people—perhaps this means only that they have lost the joy of discovery, either because they have been uniformly disappointed in their quests or have quite too easily found everything their tastes required.

Of course, there is room here for some very proper moralizing about the unsuccessfulness of persons who have sought treasures where no treasure ever was, in which pursuit they blindly pass by rich deposits of wealth, theirs for the asking and taking. There is room also for some reflection upon the curious course of those who, mistaking the glitter and phosphorescence of common, worthless stuff for real negotiable wealth, have spent their lives hoarding treasures which had no actual power to purchase any enduring joy in this world—and assuredly none in a world to come. Room, too, for some sober thinking about the people who, having found treasure, fail of declaring their ownership of it, because of their unwillingness to accept the responsibilities incident to its possession.

In our present study we reluctantly turn from the temptation to meditate upon the general principles of "discoveries"—the discoveries men have made of energies and riches whereby our race has been advanced to its present state of civilization. All the secrets of life are in the grip of God. He releases them very slowly; not that He is grudging of them, but apparently He feels that humanity is not ready to claim or safely use certain energies until the human mind has begun to sense the need of such additional aid. He can afford to wait until the time is ripe for the release of secrets whereby the eye and ear of man become acute to sights and sounds hitherto without significance.

The same kind of steam that issued from the kettle swung over Abraham's camp-fire eventually became subject to discipline in an engine. The lightning that flashed on Sinai, about the fearless feet of the great emancipator, was precisely the same energy, in essence and power, as the electricity which has been trained to perform so large a part of the world's work. There were many intervening chapters to these stories of the subjection of steam and electricity to do man's bidding. One Hero, of Alexandria, in the first century, built a turbine engine, which the priests condemned as "a devil's toy." They told Hero he was a fool (which he was for paying any attention to them) and ordered the engine to the scrap-heap. In the sixteenth century

Della Porta made an engine, but nobody could think of any use for it. A century later Savery made another engine, with about the same result. The secret was still safe. As the race gradually shed its superstitions and made ever more daring ventures with the untried, occasionally some picked man would catch elusive glimpses of this potential energy. At length a modern seer laid hold on it, bound it, and commanded it, henceforth and forever, to be man's servant. But it was a long, slow process. The Infinite intended the race to have it, but was content to wait until humanity could safely use this power.

These enriching discoveries were made mostly by accident. Men do not resolve to discover something. They develop and apply new energies, not that they may discover but because they have discovered. And yet there is a sense in which the disclosure of fresh facts is never accidental, but rather in accordance with an Infinite design. Always, when the time had arrived for the release of a great secret, some chosen man was stopped in his journey and urged to investigate a situation brimming with mystery. Somehow he is lured into the nimbus of inextinguishable fire flaring from a burning bush in some lonely and obscure Midian, or collides with the dazzling glare of a strange light on the road to some Damascus where he has an errand, promptly forgotten as the greater fact drives it into eclipse. Sometimes the potential

discoverer seems propelled by a strategy operated from "off-stage"—apparently caught in an invisible net of circumstances from which he is unable to extricate himself until he has seen his vision.

Whoever doubts that God would concern His majestic mind with the ordering of such minute details, in the disclosure of a secret to humanity, needs to be reminded that an elaborate strategy is executed even in the humble world of bees and flowers, wherein the latter, by their perfume and honey, invite the former to become messengers bearing pollen to neighboring plants of the same species.

Men have always been stumbling upon hidden treasure, seemingly by accident. The ancient astrologers sought only omens from the stars; but while so engaged made the charts upon which modern astronomers so heavily rely for data. Chemistry acknowledges its debt to the alchemists, who were mixing magical brews to prolong the lives of their royal masters, some of whom had lived quite too long. Columbus would not have ventured to cross the Atlantic if he had not been wrong in his figuring about the size of the earth. Ponce de Leon was led to Florida in quest of a mythical spring. Coronado ventured to the Kansas prairies in an attempt to find "the Seven Cities of Cibola."

Indeed, if it were not for the fact that many men, in chasing some will o' the wisp, "acciden-

tally" sighted a fixed star, the world would still be lying in ignorance. Some secrets are so baffingly mysterious that it requires ages to disclose them. Men of one age must be lured to an investigation by way of an appeal to their superstitions. Another age must be invited to take an interest through an appeal to their love of adventure. At length the treasure is revealed in its true light.

It should be remembered, however, that the discoverers must not only "happen" upon these secrets, but they must be sufficiently informed of the nature and value of their finds to make use of their unearthed treasure. Columbus discovers a continent, but Columbus was a navigator by profession. Columbus did not discover radium. He was not a physicist. He could not have discovered new craters on the moon. He was not an astronomer. He did not discover a new vaccine. He was not an histologist.

The Kingdom is like unto a discovery—the discovery of hidden treasure in a field. This is a great story. We do not know what this man was seeking, or where he was going, or why. He must have been in a hurry, for he had forsaken the highway and was cutting across through the fields. If he was in a hurry, there must have been some important objective at the end of his intended route. Just what that important thing was, the achievement of which demanded his haste, we are not told. Something happened

that made him forget what it was. Everything else in his category of hopes and ambitions faded out that day, leaving nothing but the bare fact that while crossing this field he had accidentally stumbled upon a treasure.

He drew up with a start, opened the chest mystifiedly, and stood amazed at the possibilities which lay before him. No more old drudgeries! No more going and coming at the beck and call of other men! New life, new freedom, leisure, travel, a home—his very own! If—if only! Ah, but there was a terrifying subjunctive in the way.

Clearly it would be bad policy for him to go to the owner of that field and say: "Sir, I have found a chest of treasure, down here at the far corner of your farm, and should like very much to buy it. What will you take?" It is quite possible that the owner would find his own curiosity somewhat stirred. Perhaps he might be loath to part with this hidden treasure. No; the thing to do was to buy the whole field, which he did not want, at all; and thus establish ownership of the treasure. Then he could carry it away at his leisure.

So the man in the parable went to bargain for the field. It was not a desirable purchase at any price, except for the hidden treasure. Considered as productive ground it may have been worthless. Perhaps he lived too far from the field to till it successfully, even if it had been

fertile. He inquired the price of the field. Doubtless the sight of this stranger, attempting to negotiate for a certain field belonging to this farm, may have aroused the interest of the owner. At all events, he named a price that sent the purchaser scurrying for money. Before he was done with this business it cost him everything he had in the world. But nothing mattered any more but that treasure! He converted all his property into money, and, having stripped himself clean to effect the purchase, bought the field and owned the treasure. Then he also owned the field, which he did not want. It is conceivable that his field became something of a liability. One wonders if he did not have to keep the weeds cut down, and repair the road that bound it, and mend the fences.

Sometimes one covets an extraordinary gift in the holding of a friend and wishes that it might be one's own possession—his poise, for example—his absolutely correct balance, that keeps him strong and untroubled in the midst of any and all circumstances. It would be a great thing, we think, to possess such firm anchorage, such perfect equilibrium. It would be like the discovery of precious treasure. Doubtless we may have it; but we may not just dig it up and make off with it, as we might pluck an apple from a tree along the roadside. If we are going to obtain this treasure, we will have to buy the field in which it lies. It is not a very pleasant

field to deal with. Ownership of this enclosure where mental poise is to be found involves long, patient, consistent diligence in dealing, calmly and dispassionately, with every difficulty and condition of life as each arises, practising that science of life not only during the experience of heavy strains, laid on unexpectedly, but through the petty irritations of daily routine.

There is something quite adventurous about bidding for the Kingdom to abide in one's heart. It is an all-inclusive, all-absorbing, all-eclipsing sort of thing—this Kingdom. You cannot say: "I should like to have that joy, and experience that calmness, and live my life unafraid, and face the world with a smile and death without faltering; but I intend also to reserve my right to these lesser holdings—my greed (which I prefer to speak of as my business policy), my snobbery (which sounds better when called "my social caste") and my heartless indifference (which I commonly think of as "minding my own affairs").

No; you either take the Kingdom or leave it. It is not built in pieces or by the "unit system." You cannot go through the Kingdom market and say to the salesman: "Slice me off about so much Genuine Satisfaction!" or "Weigh me out about twenty-four hours' worth of Abiding Joy." It is not to be had that way. Jesus said: "No man can serve two masters." He might wish to divide his interest—toying now with

forces that tear his life to bits, and again experimenting a little with the Kingdom; but it is out of the question. It is at this point that many a discoverer, having happened upon treasure, cannot meet the terms of possession. He has seen some friend go through an experience loaded with pain, loss, disappointment, and near-ruin, with an inner light leading him on and an inner power holding him up; or perhaps he has found, in the radiance of another's spirit-filled personality, exactly the life he desires to live. He would be glad enough to have this treasure if he could shoulder it and walk away with it, but he cannot scrape up the price of the field. To buy that field he must let go of certain possessions he cannot relinquish. There are old friendships that hold him back, friendships with men who, by their cold cynicism, make it impossible for him to develop much enthusiasm over what they would surely call pure sentiment. Certain methods of business procedure, good enough until now, cannot continue, if he is to possess this newly discovered treasure; yet how can he alter his business tactics?

It is a great experience to have acquired a sense of the Kingdom in one's soul. We come by it sometimes in unlikely places; perhaps in some uncouth, unlettered person where the treasure is hidden in a very unattractive field; we find it again in the task that is full of tiresome drudgery, in an event that is full of sorrow, in

a circumstance that had all the marks of a ruinous catastrophe. But, whenever and wherever we find it, we dare not lightly pass it by, with our interest still held by the minor quest of the hour, saying: "I shall be back this way again sometime."

It may not be doubted that many highly potential lives, having registered nothing but dull mediocrity, for the few years allotted to them, might have been great had they stopped to bargain for the hidden treasure which they had found while en route to a minor destination. And it is equally true that many a life of meagre mould and small equipment, of which nothing had been predicated and little predicted, has been clothed with power and dignity because, one day, it had not only found treasure but stripped itself stark to possess that joy supreme.

CHAPTER VII

"WHY ARE YE FEARFUL?"

FROM the lips of one whose name is always mentioned first in a roll-call of the valorous, an admonition concerning courage comes with good taste and high authority. It is not to be denied, however, that this Galilean brand of heroism has been difficult for the average man to comprehend.

Informed that self-preservation is the first law of nature, humanity has taken great pride in its ability to offer adequate defense against aggression. And we cannot imagine that Jesus, to whom personal honor was precious, would assume an attitude of indifference toward the unquestionable valor with which men have risked their lives and shed their blood to protect interests dear to themselves and their kindred.

At this hour, with the bitterness of the world's most cruel and costly war still as gall upon our tongues, it is natural that we should indulge ourselves in all the superlatives of contempt for armed combat; but it will not be becoming in us, even in the interest of strongly stating our desire for peace, that we should forget the courage of men who, from time to time, have fought to make our world safe to live in.

Many ardent Christians have gone to war be-

lieving that they were engaged in a righteous cause. After the "tumult and the shouting" had died, and the "captains and the kings" had departed, there may have arisen some doubts about the righteousness of war—any war; but, while the issue was hot, it was easy for men to persuade one another that it was the only thing to do.

It has not been so long since we, with all the experience of the world at our disposal in the pages of history, solemnly told our youth that we were sending them forth armed to save the world. And did some Christian idealist risk his professional standing, and brook the indignation of his neighbors, by hinting that war, in the rôle of redemption, had never proved to be much of a success; that war, as a friend of the weak, had previously borne a questionable reputation, he was at once an object of suspicion—possibly a coward.

At the present moment, with no rumor of war to qualify the intensity of our declarations against militancy for any cause, we are apt to forget the fact that men have fought, and counselled other men to fight, sincerely believing it to be in accordance with Christ's will. Now that I am convinced, in the face of the fact that we urged our sons and nephews to go out and fight for an idealistic principle, that the idealism possible in any war is related to the horror of war about as nothing is related to everything, I am

still left under the obligation of having said to these young men that I believed that our entrance into that war was necessary.

I hear everywhere about that war is only murder. But as I remember the upturned faces of those young men in our cantonments, listening to our impassioned words about losing one's life for the sake of high principle, they did not look like murderers. I did not think then that they were murderers, and I do not think so now.

I seem to recall a war that was waged in the last quarter of the eighteenth century in which certain of our forefathers revolted against the tyrannical impositions put upon them by a country from whence they had fled in search of liberty; have even known people to boast that their great-great-grandsires had been in it. They fought for liberty, which is—after all's said about murder—not a bad thing. I seem to recall also another war in the eighteen-sixties which freed the slaves and saved the Union. Whether my grandfather and my uncles and all the rest of our militant kin knew that they were murderers, I am not sure. They never talked about it in such terms. I gathered as a child that they thought they had done something in the interest of civilization.

We are eager for a lasting peace; but, to achieve that peace, it will not be necessary for us to forget utterly that a very great many brave and good men have gone into battle and

shed their blood, in faith believing that they were doing God's bidding; and "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Surely that much needs be said, as great conventions to-day resolve that they will never fight, no matter who calls, or when, or why. Let us have peace; but let us temper our contempt for men who fight and have fought, "lest we forget."

From time immemorial it has been taught that self-preservation is the first law of nature. Let us concede that point and discuss it. Whoever wishes to live by the laws of nature should and must bear this fact in mind. An altruistic tiger, resolving to renounce the code of the jungle, would leave no heirs to perpetuate his idealism. And any man who proposes to live under the laws governing physical life in the forest, field, and stream, would find the gospel of Christ a terribly dangerous thing to believe—much less to practise.

Any academic argument in favor of a man's fighting his way through life, with teeth and knuckles, on the ground that God's great out-of-doors is red of fang and claw, immediately falls into serious difficulties when it is observed that Our Father—albeit in control of every living thing—has not devised the same regulations for all creatures. There is a code of conduct for the beaver, another for the bat, another for the

bear, another for the bee. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like a lily of the field; but Solomon, if jealous of the lily to the point of attempting to imitate it, must not attempt to breathe carbon dioxide instead of oxygen. I hold no brief against the harbor seal. God made it, and it is a beautiful thing. But I must not try to live its life. I may be attracted by the innocence of the dove, but I must not attempt to fly.

How very little "the laws of nature" actually figure in the programme of humanity's mental, moral, and spiritual progress becomes evident when one reflects that it has been the main task of mankind's free will to antagonize certain laws in order that higher demands may be met. It is not in contempt of the law of gravity that men raise up lofty buildings. But for that law the building could not stand, and, though the architect breaks it, in the interest of human progress, he shows no disesteem for the principle itself. A man does not despise the tree he fells to the ground, nor does the act involve an impious thought concerning the God who had decreed that the tree should grow. Water-courses are deflected from the channels nature had apparently intended for them, in order that they may render service. It can easily be shown that men are expected to frustrate and intercept the operation of "natural laws" in the interest of human progress.

Jesus taught that the cultivation of the spiritual life of man is a consistent programme of rejecting the self-preservative passion which untamed nature insists upon as a hard-and-fast canon of physical existence. He would have but very little interest in the slogan "Safety First." This does not mean, however, that the Master was unnecessarily reckless with his body. He was once tempted to be too indifferent to this matter, as we shall see presently; but solved the problem conclusively when he determined that it was wrong to "test" Providence. If a cause was of sufficient importance to warrant the risk of physical life, then a man's bodily safety must take second place; but no man was ever to make a risky adventure just to ascertain to what limits of faith or audacity he might go, with the assumption that Providence would support him in his questionable experiment.

How Jesus, himself, deduced his ethical code, in respect to courage, is a story deserving careful thought. It is found in the gospel narratives of his "temptations." Whether these three specific problems, addressed to him early in his ministry, were the only temptations he ever encountered, is not stated. It is conceivable that as he regretfully watched the rich young ruler departing, unable to accept the severe terms of discipleship, Jesus may have been tempted to call him back and make things a bit easier for him. One can only guess about that.

Whatever thoughts may have occupied the Master's mind at that moment, we know that he did not call the young man back. In that impressive silence which followed Pilate's query "What is truth?" Jesus may have been tempted to tell this Roman at least certain fragments of specific truth about the cowardice of the Judæan procurator; but if he had any such thought he dismissed it. Out of his love for Simon Peter Jesus may have been tempted to excuse him from a commission involving martyrdom. It may be that Jesus was tempted every day.

II

Our present inquiry will concern, very briefly, a review of the three temptations—commonly referred to as "the temptations in the wilderness," though the phrase is not correct, strictly speaking; for only the first was staged in the wilderness. Of that event we have only to do with the bare fact that Jesus was hungry. He was tempted to solve the problem of hunger by questionable processes. When he emerged from that situation, he was still hungry but willing to be hungry. In other words, he solved his problem by refusing to attempt to solve it; for faith is sometimes functioning at its very highest capacity when it decides to content itself with the question, if it cannot find the answer.

In the case of Jesus, the rejected temptation

did not merely leave him unsullied, as he was before. No man ever comes out of such a contest exactly as he went in; surely not if he loses; and as certainly not if he wins. The business of saying "No!" to an unworthy proposal does not stop with mere negations; for in the process of declining a proposition full of menace to one's moral selfhood, one attains to a new consciousness of personal power which thereafter demands positive expression. It may well be believed that the spiritual growth of men whose moral grandeur is at once an example and inspiration to their contemporaries, can be explained not so much by the actual service they have rendered, in terms of philanthropy, as by their ability to capitalize a conquered temptation.

Jesus does not come out of the Jeshimon Wilderness merely unwhipped, having held his position without loss. He rises from it with positive convictions, ever thereafter to influence his thinking.

We must begin our study of this temptation with the understanding that we are to deal here with a fundamental economic problem. This is a matter of larger concern than the gnawing appetite of any one hungry man—even if that man were Jesus Christ. Nor is it the point at issue to discover whether or not the Master could have turned stones into bread. Had he tried to do it, and failed, that would have been

a very great disappointment. Had he tried it, and succeeded, that would have been a moral disaster. It would have made a tragic picture of him sitting there ravenously devouring a loaf that he had created by divine fiat.

No; this is an economic problem. There was a common belief in men's minds—a belief still maintained by the vast majority of people—that the whole of life is determined by economic principles. The supreme need and demand of life was bread, and everything that bread connotes—food, clothes, shelter, houses and lands, money and jewels, business, things! All this was "bread." Bread was what men lived for, and on, and by. Why did they appear daily in the markets, where they haggled and quarrelled over split-penny trades, and lied and cheated and otherwise degraded themselves, if not for bread?

Why did the farmer and the vine-grower and the fisherman strive with nature from dawn to dark, burrowing in a parsimonious soil, wrestling with the elements, gambling with the weather, the insect pests, and prowling rodents; living dull, drab lives, enslaved to drudgery—if not for bread? Why did men risk their safety and comfort in long caravan journeys across the desert sands, menaced by many foes; why did they trust their destiny to the precarious little boats wherein they sailed—if not for bread? Why did pioneers go forth, seeking new lands,

sometimes at the cost of their lives—if not for bread? Why, you could examine the whole edifice of human society from crypt to spire, and every plan of it, every beam of it, every stone of it, was laid and maintained for economic reasons.

Jesus goes under fire of the bread test with the old presuppositions clearly in mind. He comes out of it with these ancient theories completely revised. Bread was still important, but it was not the supreme fact of life. Bread had been suddenly outranked. The age-old struggle for it was now a secondary consideration. Moral integrity was more important than bread.

The Master did not arrive at that decision merely uninjured. He had achieved stupendous spiritual growth. Heretofore his body, like the bodies of other men, had cried out: "Listen to me! I am the most important concern you can have! Find me bread to eat! Do you hear me? I want bread! Get it somehow; I don't care how! Raise it, make it, buy it, beg it, steal it! It is nothing to me how you get it, so you get it! Have it honestly, or grab it out of another man's hands, or work a miracle to produce it—the process is of no concern to me; but—get it!"

It was not only a great hour in the experience of Jesus, but it was an important occasion for the whole moral world, when this tempted soul declared that man does not live by bread; for this decision registered a new freedom. Hence-

forth Jesus and all who follow him are at liberty to consider greater imperatives than bodily needs and sensory satisfactions.

How a man is to answer the question "Is the stomach more important than the soul?" may depend considerably upon the recency of his dinner. Jesus went without bread for forty days before he felt himself entitled to offer an opinion on that subject. One can only imagine the spiritual exultation of the Master as he arrives at this new consciousness of fearlessness! His Father would henceforth safeguard him through any and all emergencies! Now he could go back to his chosen task with a sense of insurance against the annoying claims of the body. What cared he for his body?

In this first flush of enthusiasm over his liberating discovery, Jesus mounts to the balcony of the temple and surveys the crowd of hungry, quarrelling, miserable people who, if he could only communicate his new joy to them, might share his independence of the old slaveries. It was easy to see that their chief thought was bread. It would be a great hour for them if he could contrive to make them understand that bread had been demoted from its ancient place of supremacy in favor of a higher quest, which guaranteed against all fears and appetites. But how could he attract their attention to his new discovery? Perhaps if he were to leap down among them unhurt they would listen to what-

ever he chose to say. And why should he not do it? Had he not just demonstrated the secondary importance of bodily safety? Why not immediately capitalize this discovery? How better could he declare to these needy people his own emancipation from worry over physical conditions than to defy openly one of the laws which held men fast in their slavery?

This second temptation of Jesus would never have become an issue with him, had he not encountered and vanquished the first temptation. It is entirely believable that certain temptations are never addressed to men until they have successfully attended to certain other temptations. Jesus will not be inclined to leap from the pinnacle of the temple until he has convinced himself that the affairs of the body are of negligible importance. Ibsen's Brand discovers himself fairly swamped with baffling moral problems only after he had successfully demonstrated his ability to grapple with a few of the tests his vocation had put upon him.

Jesus comes out of this second temptation with a new appraisal of his task. It was not a mission that could be performed by a single spectacular act. He had been tempted to presume on God's protection that day, for the sake of taking a short-cut to the attention of the multitude. If successful, he could accomplish in one moment what it might require years to achieve by slower processes.

But Providence was not to be put to such tests. Merely because a man had, by faith and courage, made himself independent of the claims of appetite and fear, it did not follow that he had the right to jeopardize his body to astound a crowd—not even to bring that crowd a life-giving message. It was entirely right and proper to lose one's life, if need be, to give so vital a message to the crowd; but it was unethical to use such means, and then expect to come out of it without a scratch. This resolution, however, was no more important than the other salient fact which Jesus laid hold upon at that hour. He had conceived a new idea about crowds while he sat up there, pondering over his dilemma and wrestling with his temptation. He reappraised all his thinking about crowds. Men were not to be saved or lost in the mass. Human society was not a solid chunk, to be thought of as if it were some gigantic animal, possessed of one mind, one need, and one desire. It was, rather, a sum total of that many little separate human worlds, wherein each individual had a right to his own peculiar apprehension of his spiritual heritage and the best way to develop it.

One cannot but believe that it would be of great advantage to our present work in the field of the humanities if the leaders in sociological research to-day might consent to seat themselves, mentally, at Jesus' side, on top the temple, and listen to him as he soliloquizes about

crowds—about people in bulk. How easy it is to make card indices, tabulating human souls on a basis of nationality, economic rating, good or bad, clean or dirty, energetic or lazy, normal, abnormal, or subnormal. How simple it is to do humanity up into large packages and chuck them into standard-sized pigeon-holes. Here, for instance, is a swarm down in the market-place, in the plaza before the temple. We will call this the market-place crowd. Perhaps we can deal with it on the simple basis of its having come to buy and sell, to quarrel and fight over buying and selling, to be jealous and envious and predatory over buying and selling.

And yet, how can one be sure that any one of these people should be bunched up with all the rest of them into a parcel labelled "Market-place"? How easy to say of the whole twenty-five thousand men in attendance at a prize-fight that they are of a certain type—and not a very desirable type, either. How natural to say of the congregation in a crowded church that these people all belong together, generically related. Jesus knew better.

Down the temple stairs comes the Man of Galilee, no longer eager to convert the mind of the pack, but anxious to appeal to the best in the individual. His temptation had been based upon his belief that he must deal with this crowd as a crowd. He would leap down among them in a death-defying adventure that would

bring them up to a gasping amazement! But, no; the crowd could never be convinced as a crowd. He would have to tell his story to men as individuals. He would tell Peter and Andrew and John and James. It would be a slow process; but it was the better way.

Doubtless it was the impatience of Jesus to communicate this story of conquered fears to a harried world that led him immediately thereafter to contemplate, from a mountain-top, the problems of the nations. He was well aware that he had become the custodian of certain great spiritual facts which would make any nation strong and prosperous that practised them. He could make the nations listen to him, provided he was willing to concede them a few points. The temptation shaped itself somewhat in this wise: "You may have these kingdoms of the world and dominate them; but you may have their confidence and discipleship only as you grant them the right to the old processes whereby national consciousness has been conserved. You, yourself, will have to bow before the ancient duplicities and diplomacies. The nations are not to have prosperity until they have peace; but, to insure their peace, they will rely upon the old 'laws of nature.'"

Jesus knew that this policy of the "armed peace" is no more practicable for a nation than for an individual. It was a confession of fear. The man who carried a gun signified that he was

afraid. The nation that put its trust in its army was afraid. He wished the kingdoms of the world to adopt his programme of life, but the very first fact he would have to tell them was his discovery of the needlessness of fear, if one lived by faith.

He knew he could not have the nations, therefore, until, through the persuasion of individuals, enough men could be induced to believe and exemplify this theory of an undefended fearlessness in their own conduct, to warrant a whole nation's acceptance of the principle as a feasible law. It may have been in that very hour that Jesus evolved the programme of an apostolate, and formulated the great commission: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

III

Among the various worries, bred of fear, which Jesus would delete from the lives of his followers, is the anxiety about to-morrow. A man who lived by faith would refuse to permit to-morrow to become an encumbrance. This mythical institution, "to-morrow," a day that has never yet arrived, is a menace both to the optimist and the pessimist. The former is always tempted to borrow too much from it, to expect too much of it, to trust too much to it. The latter regards it as a dark and dangerous pitfall yawn-

ing before his feet. Jesus advised against one's taking "anxious thought" about to-morrow.

It is not to be concluded from this that the Master sanctioned either a nonchalant attitude toward the future or the cultus of opportunism which snatches up a transient pleasure or an inferior task to-day, rather than wait in patience for a more enduring joy or a larger responsibility. He drew a convincing picture of two men building houses, one for to-day, the other with a hope of future stability. Remembering how much less garrulous are the temperamentally prudent and conservative than the thriftless and opportunistic, one suspects that as these men built their houses, the careless believer in the permanence of sand may have received many felicitations from his own sort, on the ground of his being a very energetic fellow. To judge by appearances, he was a great deal more efficient than his plodding neighbor, who was still digging a cellar and hauling stone when his progressive friend's house was ready for shingles.

When Jesus offered counsel against the debilitating menace of to-morrow, he was not pleading for sand-founded houses, short-term programmes, or a policy of "Take the cash, and let the credit go!" He was only urging that to-morrow should not become a source of mental misery or the over-drawn account of optimism. He seemed to feel that in the calendar of human service there is only one day—to-day!

How very many generous deeds, planned with good intent, never arrived at fruition because there stood this fabulous to-morrow in which they might be performed. How very much of neural strain, which might have been invested in a better cause, has been wasted in anxieties over what might possibly come to pass to-morrow. Jesus understood that the fearless life must reduce its worries to a minimum by keeping all of its affairs settled, day by day, in so far as that is humanly possible. This admonition occurs in many intensely practical statements, such as: "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him." How much of human wretchedness might be avoided if men, misunderstanding or disagreeing, would resolve to arrive at some amicable pact before parting.

To live an unafraid life, men must refuse to carry grudges, for grudges cloud the spirit and hamper the freedom of the mind. This is in accord with modern research in psychology. It is infinitely better to forgive and forget an injury, even if the injured knows himself to have been fully within his rights and the other entirely in the wrong. There is a stock phrase, in these days of fast driving, to the effect that many a man who had the "right of way" is in the cemetery. Generally speaking, it is of little consequence in a quarrel which contender has the better case. If they part estranged, however

each may fancy himself the winner, both have suffered a serious loss.

Indeed, Jesus insists that the man who wishes to live without worry, in order that he may live fearlessly, should insure himself against these soul-torturing strifes with his fellows to the point of yielding to any and all demands, rather than contest a claim. It is to be doubted if any maxim in the Galilean ethical code has been considered so difficult of practical execution as the commandment: "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." If this injunction is examined, by "the case method," it will be found that the occasions for one's exercise of this particular type of forbearance are infrequent. Were one to review the experiences of a lifetime in which one, having been struck in the face, utterly without provocation of the blow, was called upon to decide instantly whether to strike back or "turn the other cheek," one might be surprised to note how seldom this problem had arisen. It is conceivable that large numbers of active and useful people arrive at a ripe three-score-and-ten without once encountering such a situation.

The Master appears to have thought through these problems of human relations, coming out at length with the belief that in the long run "non-resistance" pays. His theory evidently held that the man who goes unarmed and offers no defense, can make out a better case for

his fearlessness than the bully. His ability to take unjust punishment without retaliation may be mistaken for cowardice. That would be the hardest part of the "non-resistance" programme. But even this disadvantage, with all that may be said against it by the "red-blooded" apostle of swagger and swank, is not to be compared with the actual defilement of the man's spirit who, when struck, seeks his oppressor's level and wallows with him like a beast. If he is man enough, he can recover from the injury of an unprovoked blow, and find himself within an hour possessed of larger spiritual resources than he had before. But the blistering memory of a bestial encounter with an enemy, in which their mutual hate was brought to a devastating flame, will rouse him in the night and keep him awake and torture him—no matter who won the so-called victory.

The student finds considerable interest in the other brief cases in point which Jesus cites. Undoubtedly the statement had a purely local significance which admonishes: "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." It will be remembered that Jesus' nation was virtually a slave state, tributary to a very haughty and overbearing empire. Perhaps it was not unusual for a private citizen to be imposed upon by the soldiers and petty executives from Rome. A case of this kind appears when Simon of Cyrene is suddenly dragged out of the

crowd that lined the streets on the day of the crucifixion and compelled to assist Jesus in bearing a too heavy wooden cross.

Naturally, Jesus was discreet in his remarks about that government. Not that he compromised with truth in this respect; but it would do so little good to hurl himself futilely at an institution whose abuses he could not abate or correct. Any misguided and indiscreet flare of indignation against the government would only work hardship to his friends. The priests realized this, and tried to make the most of it. On one occasion they asked him for a statement of his attitude toward the whole matter of taxation. Was it right for them to pay tribute to Cæsar? A large opportunity was opened to Jesus at that moment to plunge himself into a maze of difficulty. If he were to say, "The tax is just," the priests were prepared to excoriate him on the ground of disloyalty to the welfare of his own people. Did he say, "The tax is unjust," his arrest would have followed within the hour. He dodged the issue, to put it frankly, by calling for a Roman coin. They handed him the money. On one side was a crude picture, in low relief, of the reigning emperor; on the other the well-known scrawl of the same person. "Whose image?" asked Jesus. "Cæsar's!" they replied. "Whose superscription?" "Cæsar's!" "Then it should be restored to Cæsar." The situation was fully met. Their question still remained un-

answered, but it was a question they had no right to ask.

Jesus has somewhat to say, however, about this delicate Jewish-Roman problem when he speaks of "the second mile." The sentence was more or less cryptic, but they knew what he meant. They were not to resist the impositions of their tyrannical Roman masters. If they were "impressed" for a mile it were better to continue for another mile than to resist. If every Jew had been wise enough to understand the psychology involved here and had practised it, one may suppose that Rome, deeming it unnecessary to maintain armed garrisons in Judæa, in view of the fact that there was no insubordination or unrest among her Palestinian subjects, would have gladly withdrawn her expensive police. That would have solved the problem to the complete satisfaction of the general Jewish public. It was the "resisters" who kept the problem of the old animosities alive! It is the people who insist upon their "rights" that keep the powder factories working three shifts per day.

The other illustration, also rather definitely localized to the time and country, resides in the statement: "If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." The principle back of this is identical with the statements considered above. The main point of interest it has for the student of the gospel to-day rests in the fact that a defend-

ant in a modern court who, having lost his case and his coat, would voluntarily hand over his cloak, might find his act interpreted as "contempt of court," involving his surrender of yet more apparel to settle with an offended magistrate. The judge, in Jesus' day, may not have been so sensitive to an implied and unspoken hint of an unfair decision.

In short, the Master's new programme of life utterly repudiated the ancient theory of "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Men were counselled against attempts to match their adversaries in violence. But one is not to understand that this admonition left the follower of Jesus in a state of listless indifference to his oppressors. There was a positive feature to one's attitude toward foes. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you." This is a commandment quite beyond the capacity of small-minded people. There is nothing simple or easy about it. But men who have practised it are willing to testify that, however impracticable it may sound, its eventualities, in specific cases, startlingly verify the Master's statement that this is the process by which humanity becomes acutely conscious of its sonship to God. And when a man has arrived at this sense of his filial relationship to the Source of all power, he needs no longer be afraid.

IV

Once possessed of the firm conviction that he is, in very truth, a child of God, the believer lives by the light of a faith in an unseen guidance which enables him to see his way. He finds himself increasingly empowered with the capacity to discriminate between the transitory and the permanent in life. He endeavors to deal with realities. Jesus told his countrymen that they acted like little children, playing in the marketplace—playing they were happy, playing they were sad; they had not sounded the depths of life to see what things really were sources of joy and sadness.

Many a man fears old age. He tries to insure himself against want through that non-productive period by laying up something for a rainy day. It does not occur to him that even as he had lived, through his youth, upon anticipation, he must spend his declining years in retrospection. He thinks his old age demands nothing but an abundance of food and a comfortable shelter, forgetting that his sole occupation will be reminiscence and his most conspicuous possession his memory. It is a sad story that Jesus tells of the man who resolutely prepared for his oncoming years of enforced leisure by storing his barns with grain. The consuming passion of his active life was to hoard corn. Doubtless this

thrifty man marvelled at the lack of preparedness exhibited all about him by men who were making no arrangements to insure their peace and happiness in the period of their senescence. And it was a great day in this man's life when, having rebuilt his barns on a larger scale and having filled them all to the eaves with grain, he announced that he had completed his long task. Henceforth he could eat, drink, and be merry.

It was at this point that an angel arrived with the statement that this man's soul was required. It was the only thing the foresighted farmer had neglected in his programme of preparedness; and now, it appeared, this was the only thing that would be required. When the angel called him the summons did not imprecate him as a rogue or a rascal. With candid truth the messenger said: "Come, fool!"

It may confidently be believed that any man who comes into his old age loaded with memories of generous deeds, who finds in his mail occasional letters of appreciation from men to whom his acts of service had brought happiness and prosperity, who, at length, draws the drapery of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams, dies rich. And no man need fear the arrival of twilight who had found life's realities by the torch of faith.

The same logic applies to the haunting dread of sudden death. Men who live by faith live fearlessly, for they are ready. Because death

so frequently comes unannounced, "like a thief in the night," it behooves every man to expect this visitation and be prepared for it. It goes without saying that if the summoned were to have a few days' notice, he would try to be in readiness for his visitor. "If the good man of the house," said Jesus, "had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have been on the alert."

The Master's cure for fear is a simple process of determining spiritual values as supreme over material things. Having reached that decision, the next step is the highest possible cultivation of the spiritual. This cultivation proceeds by the exercise of faith, and faith is grounded in one's consciousness of being a child of God.

CHAPTER VIII

"WHATSOEVER YE WOULD"

IF any one statement of Jesus may be said to summarize the whole of his teachings concerning men's proper attitude toward one another, it is the "Golden Rule." Jesus did not call it by that name, nor did his disciples. The phrase does not figure in the terminology of religious thought until a comparatively recent date. Whoever first called it the "Golden Rule" may have thought he had come upon a felicitous title for this vital statement, inasmuch as gold has been a symbol of worth. But with us gold does not so much carry the concept of worth as of the ornamental. Gold is something very nice to possess, but it can be done without. Most people can and do live without it in any appreciable quantity.

And when this term "gold" is not doing duty as a symbol for things ornamental, it is carrying the illusory burden of some idea woven of dreamstuff. It is easy to fall into the way of thinking about the "Golden Rule" on about the same terms as the "Golden Fleece" or the "Golden Apple," legendary matters which possess no reality, or in the same mood in which one views an illusory and unattainable "Golden Age."

If, therefore, we are to speak of this striking sentence as the "Golden Rule," let it be borne in mind that it is not something founded on sentiment and yoked to a myth. It is not something merely to be hoped for and dreamed of, like a fabulous "Golden City." It is, rather, an energy—a kinetic energy—which, like any other dynamic urge, must, if utilized at all, be practised under certain fixed regulations, regulations which promise and threaten. Electricity can be so conducted into one's house, through ignorance or fraud on the part of incompetent or unscrupulous workmen, that the power of it is a constant menace to one's safety. In that case, the more power admitted, the greater the risk. The fact that light and heat are actually coming through this defective wiring is quite beside the point; for at any moment the energy that had been serving as a benefit may become an active enemy.

The Golden Rule—for all its innocuous and dreamy label—is exactly this sort of an energy. Properly adjusted to life, it gives promise of greater constructive power than any other force. Incorrectly applied to the problems of society, it holds out dire threats to the people who mishandle it.

The problem of the Golden Rule, briefly stated, is to do unto others what you would like to have others do unto you; not what others have done, are doing, or may yet do unto you,

but what you would like to have them do. This, one sees at a glance, is not a mere passive and supine acceptance of whatever unkindness, contumely, or fraud may be practised upon one by other people. It is not the mere negative virtue of sitting still and refusing to throw back the bricks that have been hurled at you. The Golden Rule is a positive energy which not only refuses to do unto others the things they do that bring you pain and loss, but actually performs toward others such service and benefit as you wish they would perform for you.

It would be very difficult for any one man alone to practise the Golden Rule in a world committed unanimously to the policy of treating others "as they treat you." When Jesus enunciated this principle, he was not alone in his belief. He had succeeded in persuading a few other people to accept it. Shortly after his tragedy, as many as one hundred and twenty men and women were found willing to go to almost any length of adventure and sacrifice to demonstrate this theory of correct living. But in Jesus' case the Golden Rule was so dangerous to practise that it brought him to his death. At any moment, up to the final act on the cross, he could have gone free by discarding this principle. That the Golden Rule was hard to practise during the apostolic days the history of the martyrs bears tragic witness. If the catacombs tell a truthful story, many people who tried to live by

this statute found it a very dangerous law to obey.

Now that civilization has become more and more advised of the social and economic values of this maxim, it is not so difficult to live by it, at least in the major matters of ethical concern as they affect the relationship of individuals. Surely, anybody can see that the more people who can be induced to accept this doctrine, the easier it will be for all who attempt to practise it. Like any other sentiment, it must first be made operative and successful in small social units, like the family, the neighborhood, the school, the factory, the church, these units combining and co-operating with other larger groups, until the principle is recognized in the corporate consciousness of the state.

This does not mean that no individual in the employ of a large department store can safely obey this law until all the other employees share his belief, any more than it is necessary for every employee in that organization to be scrupulously honest before any one employee can safely be a person of integrity; but it does mean that as the numbers increase who are pledged to the Golden Rule, the law becomes increasingly valuable and practicable.

Whoever is disposed to doubt whether the numbers of adherents to this principle are increasing should be reminded that within our lifetime the first really constructive and serious

effort is being made, on the part of the nations, to arrive at an understanding based upon the Golden Rule. There may be room for doubt whether this bridge-burning renunciation of certain national rights, previously considered of supreme importance, is an entirely safe principle for any one state to adopt, in the face of the refusal of other states to conform to that programme. It may be some time yet before this policy can be internationally agreed upon. But the day is coming—coming so fast that many of us who are now living will see it in active operation. A hundred years from now men will be utterly mystified as they read the history of wars waged by a civilization that, in all other matters, seemed to be approximately of normal mind.

It is not in the province of our discussion to enlarge upon the issues involved in an attempt to arrive at international amity. It may be remarked, however, that the very grounds of our depression over the present relationships have an element of hope in them. With horror we read of new explosives, lethal gases, and "death rays," with a capacity for such wholesale destruction of life and property as was never known before in the world. Predictions have been freely offered that another war would mean the end of our civilization. Assuming this to be true, may it not also and consequently be true that the nations, fully aware of the nature of

that calamity, will now be much more reluctant to resort to war, as a solvent of their difficulties, than ever before? It may be that the diabolical ingenuity with which nations have made ready to annihilate one another—a fitting and logical climax to the long development of scientized murder on a colossal scale—will be shown to be one of the excellent reasons for adopting the Golden Rule internationally.

But however depressing is the tardiness of states to understand the practical values of this "whatsoever-ye-would" law, nobody can doubt the increasing efficacy of it in the programme of the smaller and less unwieldy social units. Communities—even very large cities—have been making some startling gains lately in the demonstration of this theory. Great industrial concerns have resorted to it after trying every other expedient to solve their problems of unrest, disloyalty, and mutual antagonism. If it is argued that they have not done so for ethical reasons, but purely because of the sound economic principle involved, this is only an added testimony in favor of the everlasting rightness of Jesus' mind. If the things which Jesus said men "ought" to do, have now been shown to be the things that they "must" do, if they would live and prosper, that only brings new evidence to support the case of this divinely inspired Galilean.

And it adds an interesting complex to the

whole Golden Rule problem; to wit: not only does it become easier to obey this law, with every additional recruit brought into the "whatsoever-ye-would" camp; but it becomes increasingly difficult for men to live any other way. Within the past twenty-five years we have witnessed a marked change in the social position of the mean man who lives for himself alone. Until recently he might turn a deaf ear to every appeal for philanthropic aid, and still maintain his place in society. It goes without saying that people remarked behind his back upon his lack of generosity; but at the meeting of the bank directors, to which he belonged, nobody took him to task for being a selfish old miser. To-day the man who tries to live for himself and his immediate family is experiencing so many grave discomforts that it is only by the utmost resolution he can maintain an attitude of uncharitableness. The solicitor who invites him to release some of his wealth into the channels which supply the more serious social needs, is not now some timid woman, earnestly begging a pittance for some ill-supported agency of mercy, but a business man, himself of wealth and influence, perhaps, boldly stating the imperative needs of a large group of philanthropic concerns. Appeals for help used not to reach this mean man. He barricaded himself behind a battery of clerks, and became incomunicado to other people's problems. To-day he faces a

bombardment, put on by the "Community Chest," that makes it utterly impossible for him to hold his place in the respect of his business colleagues, unless he at least makes a pretense of altruism by doing his share in terms of money and work. Once it was easier for a man to live for himself than for others. It has become less and less easy, until now it is a position so indefensible and untenable that only an occasional wealthy recluse can qualify as "miser."

When Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me," he doubtless preferred that they would be drawn by love and faith; but however they are drawn and whatever may be the exact urge that brings them to a practice of the Christ-life, they are coming to it! Every day it becomes more difficult for the individual to resist the demands of Christian civilization; and the more potential he is, the more he feels the tug of this energy.

II

Too much attention cannot be paid by professing and teaching Christians to the task of defining the Golden Rule as a positive, aggressive principle. It is to be suspected that the "non-resistance" theory, which we have remarked upon previously, could be shown to be an impractical and almost futile recommendation, unless practised in combination with this

kinetic altruism comprehended by the law we are now considering.

Detailed advice relating to the most feasible application of the Golden Rule, in the experience of the average man, is offered in Jesus' counsel to feed the hungry, house the homeless, minister to the sick, and visit the imprisoned, concluding with the trenchant statement: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

The history of men's efforts to perform such philanthropies is intensely interesting. It is impossible here to do more than hint at this progression in the field of practical charity. Until recent times such deeds were sporadic. The generous individual, moved by pity and sympathy, made his gift to the needy who happened to be under his personal observation. Not often did he hunt them up; rarely did he investigate the causes of their misfortune. They needed fuel, and he sent them a load of coal. They were hungry, and he fed them. They were sick, and he provided a physician.

It became evident that this process was ineffective. The contribution it made to the solution of the problem of human misery was very small. Social groups endeavored to relieve this situation by organizing the local charities, to avoid pauperizing duplications of gifts and insure against neglecting many worthy cases in which a desperate need had been too proud or

too modest to disclose itself. This was a long step in advance of the bungling procedure by which food and clothing were distributed by the benevolently disposed, at such seasons of the year as prompted a peculiar surge of charity. And then, when these charity organizations had achieved enough influence and confidence to warrant their study of the problems involved, they began to suspect that the mere distribution of material necessities to the poor, and medical service to the indigent sick, was but making an open bid for an increasing list of dependents, unless certain character-building agencies could go hand in hand with these charities.

Nobody had thought much about the "prophylactic" feature of human rehabilitation. It was thought to be sufficient to deal with poverty, illness, and general misfortune when the condition had become acute; but no one had seemed much concerned about heading it off in advance of the acute stage. Latterly it has been determined that one way to help a sick baby is through free medical advice offered the mother before the infant is born. It has been found that a good way to minister to the sick is in the establishment of fresh-air camps which keep under-privileged people from becoming sick. The day nursery solves certain problems of the poverty-stricken home before these problems blossom forth into a grave social menace. Instead of waiting until the youth arrives in prison,

we are finding it advisable to minister to him through the Boy Scouts, the Young Men's Christian Association, and vocational commissions.

This new attitude toward philanthropy is still an experiment, but it has already proved the case for an aggressive altruism that does not sit supinely waiting a call to deal with an almost irremediable problem, preferring to handle it before it has become hopeless. Of course, a great deal of misapplied sentiment has recently been tearing down these benefits of a scientized altruism. If, on the one hand, we are to reconstruct society by encouraging the weak to assume all the obligations of which they are capable, we must, on the other hand, continue to place sufficient deterrents in the path of persons committed to a programme of lawlessness to insure the perpetuation of this splendid scheme of altruism. So long as it is possible for the drunken driver of a motor-car to escape with a paltry fine, after having fled from the scene of an accident in which he carelessly injured a child, everything that our progressive philanthropy is doing to mend human society and create a better citizenship is heavily handicapped. To the proper execution of the Golden Rule in these days, when we are attempting to give it its fullest chance to operate, we must have not only the finest possible agencies for the assistance of the poor and defective into their rightful oppor-

tunities, but a new firmness in dealing with the types who, in increasing numbers, are making human life cheap and crime easy! There will not be much use in going down into the zones of the poor and discouraged, to collect their little boys, and feed them, and patch them up, and put them through the clinics, and fill their teeth, and wash their necks, and teach them Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and the flag salute and sixteen ways to knit a knot and build a camp-fire, if, after having done all that, we are obliged, at length, to turn them loose into a society that merely grins contemptuously at the laws of the commonwealth!

In Jerusalem Jesus found, over a certain alleged healing spring, a huge pavilion, built to shelter the people who lay about, on the stone flagging, waiting for a chance to enter the water, at the irregular and unannounced seasons when it was supposed an angel invested the pool with therapeutic properties. It is to be doubted if the city fathers in Jerusalem had much faith in that pool. But the down-and-outers had faith in it and were willing to lie there for days and weeks, waiting and watching for a display of its healing virtues. The pavilion had been built to protect this unfortunate company while it nursed the hope of a restoration.

Any scheme of altruism that merely builds pavilions over wretchedness is not a scientific proposition. The task of philanthropy has quite

outgrown the wish to make miserable people as comfortable as possible in their misery. It must now proceed to bring them out of their predicament. And the same rule must govern us in this worthy enterprise that lies at the root of any quest for life's realities. Jesus' belief that man does not live by bread alone; that the real things are not food, raiment, and the material possessions which are subject to destruction by moth, rust, and thieves; that if men are to be helped into a larger life it will have to be by way of spiritual advancement—should apply, also, to our social programmes. The objects of our charity must be morally rehabilitated! This will come to pass only as kindness, gentleness, and material aid are offered in combination with a firm demand that the laws of society shall be respected and enforced.

The practical considerations of this problem are very grave. Our obvious need is to decrease the number of persons who compose the "fourth estate," by raising them up into self-respect and economic freedom. Thus only can society protect itself against the menace of a discontented, underfed, ignorant substratum of life. History has some tragic tales to tell of idle riches that took no account of the sullen poor until the latter had become numerous enough to put their superiors into the shambles and fill the gutters of their proud streets with the blood of a misguided aristocracy. It is good insurance—if one

is not disposed to view this problem in any higher light—to keep the numbers of the restless and revengeful folk at the bottom of society as small as possible. There is only one way to do that, and that way is not through the building of institutions to shelter them in their misery. They must be lifted out of their degradation. That process will be largely a moral issue. It cannot be done with food, clothes, and medicine. It cannot be done in the polyclinic. These "other things" will help, but the moral issue is more important.

Whether there may be any reasonable hope advanced that, along with our scientific charities, we can also inculcate a respect for law, will depend seriously upon the attitude of the general public toward legislation. The prosperous and philanthropic merchant or manufacturer who, as an expression of his interest in the welfare of the children of poverty, annually donates thousands of dollars to the support of agencies which will give these unfortunates more liberties, more confidence, and more opportunity to express their own wills, but who makes it possible for the rumor to gain circulation that he is, himself, a lawbreaker, may as well keep his money. In the long run, any practice of the Golden Rule that gives people a larger chance to achieve human liberties, but fails to teach and demand a respect for every man's human rights, is surely not in accord with the wish of its divine author.

III

We are naturally led to inquire, in pursuance of the problem of human relations, what Jesus taught in respect to law and government, and what was his attitude on this subject. Would he, in the interest of a consistent policy of "non-resistance" and observance of the so-called Golden Rule, dispose of laws, police, courts, and judges? Nothing is clearer than that Jesus' recommendations in the field of altruism postulate a system of civil and moral laws. In his own day the civil and moral laws were practically one. Moreover, they were vigorous, to the very point of being austere. We have no word from Jesus advising the abrogation of any of these statutes on the ground of severity.

When the rich young ruler asks for the terms of immortal life, he is questioned first about his morality. From his youth up, he replied, he had kept the laws. Jesus commended him, and added: "One thing thou lackest. If thou wilt be perfect, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and come, follow me." This counsel to invest his all in charity was predicated upon his having pursued a law-abiding programme that lacked but one point of perfection!

"Think not," said the Master, "that I am come to destroy the law . . . but to fulfil." Surely, any modern school of socialism that wishes to make Jesus the attorney for a cause wherein every man shall have his own ideas on

the subject of human conduct, will find difficulty in disposing of his statement respecting the laws of his day: "Whosoever shall break one of the least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven."

There were many ceremonial laws among the Hebrews in which Jesus could not be expected to be interested. They had neither outcome nor purpose. Such learned disputations as were held over the proper depth of a hem on the priest's robe and the exact proportions of the herbs employed as incense, and the procedure of washing the dishes used in the sacrificial rites—these matters were, to his mind, not worth the trouble spent upon them. A law respecting the Sabbath, which defined as "reaping" the act of shelling a few kernels of wheat, as one walked through a ripened harvest-field, did not impress him as a moral obligation at all. But in all matters involving personal or property rights, his advices only supplemented the existing statutes. It is stated that after his healing of a leper, he commanded the beneficiary to go at once and show himself to the priest, offering the "gift" enjoined by the Mosaic code. While it may be assumed that if Jesus had pronounced this man free of his leprosy, there was little reason for a priestly investigation of the case, the Master's attitude in this matter discloses how important he believed this hygienic regulation to be.

Jesus recognized the strong necessity for a reform in men's attitude toward the laws of the day. "Tradition" had made it possible for privileged men to dodge many of these fundamental laws. Even the ancient commandment "Honor thy father and thy mother" had become so encrusted with Talmudic amendments that a dishonorable child could deny his obligation to support his parents in their old age. Apparently the Master was stoutly against any kind of legal interpretation that would make it possible for the spirit of a wise and just law to be violated.

But while he saw the need of reform, Jesus frowned upon any fanatical procedure that would attempt to correct every evil in the world by drastic means. The kingdom of heaven could afford to be patient, in respect to some conditions, rather than enter upon a policy of extermination.

He illustrated his thought with the parable of the field in which wheat had been sown. By night an enemy sought revenge by sowing tares in this field. Presently the good grain and the bad grew side by side. The servants were for weeding out the tares as they grew; but the owner prudently decided to wait until the harvest. Under the winnowing-fan the discrimination would occur and the tares could be destroyed.

One is disposed to think that this parable should be called to the attention of many loyal

and industrious servants who feel the necessity of plucking up all the tares, even to the jeopardy of the wheat harvest. The Christian churches of a certain city, for example, sincerely believing that the Sunday operation of places of amusement and recreation should be abolished, bring enough pressure to bear upon the public officials to achieve their wish. It is their hope and expectation that the closing of these amusement institutions will add glory to the church. The fact that thousands of people, believing that they have been deprived of what they consider to be a harmless pleasure, through the irascible zeal of the church, harden their hearts against any appeal from that quarter, should be sufficient evidence that this procedure is at least a highly debatable matter. Something tells one it would not have been Jesus' way of dealing with such a problem. True, he indignantly drove some secular enterprises out of the temple, but that was a different matter. If the churches would like to attempt certain reforms of this sort to-day their precedent for it will be as good as their need of it is great.

It will be well for us to remember that Jesus considered the public with great compassion: "Sheep having no shepherd." John the Baptist, a fiery reformer, was so disappointed with the Master's pacific attitude that from his prison cell he sent messengers to inquire whether Jesus really was The Christ, or should they expect

another. John had predicted that when this divine character appeared, he would summon the world to judgment for its iniquities. The axe would be laid at the root of the tree, the winnowing-fan would "purge the threshing-floor."

But Jesus did not come with an axe or a flail. He never denounced these unhappy worldlings who sought surcease from their drudgeries. They moved him to pity and appealed to his spirit of compassion. He wished them to be his friends, for only thus would he be able to give them aid and counsel. John said: "He will thoroughly purge his floor!" Jesus said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

CHAPTER IX

"STRAIT IS THE GATE"

WHEN Jesus pleads for a more abundant life, he recognizes the fact that much of life's enlargement and enrichment must come to pass through the stern elimination of useless and restraining impedimenta.

The "broad way" which the majority travelled, because it permitted their carrying along with them all the luggage of sensory pleasure, was in reality a road leading to destruction. The way into life was narrow. Men who hoped to become useful and successful must be possessed of a singleness of purpose. Their lives would be briefly lived, and to do the best they could it would be impossible for any one of them to achieve much by way of service. This made it quite imperative that they should enter upon life undeterred by unnecessary burdens.

It is a very vigorous gospel that counsels: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off."

Men discover and develop their strengths mostly by dealing severely with their weaknesses. The elimination of debilitating influences and inclinations from one's life is of as

much importance as the accretion of energies which upbuild. Sometimes, if certain potential souls were not disposed to attend to these necessary eliminations, themselves, it was done for them through very painful processes.

Pursuant to this theme, Jesus tells a story which, although no longer than "the Lord's Prayer," covers a broad sweep of three years. It is a parable about a tree.

A certain man had planted a fig-tree. It was not an accidental growth; it had been planted with design. Strangely enough, this tree was not planted in an orchard, but in a vineyard, where it may have come to think of itself as somewhat apart from the busy life of its environment. It may have been more magnanimous than to hold its humble friends, the vines, in contempt; but assuredly there was a marked contrast observable between the majestic bearing of this favored tree and the awkward, ungainly appearance of the vines whose scanty foliage boasted neither flower nor perfume; forever hobbling on ugly crutches.

Moreover, this tree might almost have been pardoned for reflecting that it was an aristocrat among trees, coming from an ancestry so long and honorable that its name adorned the pages of every great religious book in the world, its portrait stamped upon the empire's coins and crests.

Perhaps the vine-dresser who cared for the

vineyard was partly responsible for the tree's self-delusion. Apparently he had considered the fig-tree chiefly as an ornament. He admired its beauty and symmetry. Perhaps he had hoped each season that some fruit would grow. But he did nothing to encourage it.

The tree never considered itself a delinquent. It rejoiced in its lineage, beauty, and the distinction of being more important than its neighbors. At length, however, the vine-dresser came to have certain misgivings about the tree. Had there been a single fig hidden in its foliage, he would have had more joy over it than in all the baskets of grapes produced by his vines. Just as there is "more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth"—dragged from degradation—than over the salvation of ninety-nine highly respectable people who had lived their circumscribed lives propped up by the trellis of conventionality, so would there have been more joy over one fig on this worthless tree than over dozens of bushels of grapes from these plodding vines.

Yet such had been his affection for this tree that the vine-dresser had left undone a few things which might have promoted its usefulness. Out of the abundance of his compassion, he had hesitated to introduce drastic remedies. Every season he had stood there, with knife and spade and pruning-hook in his hands, wondering whether he should perform or wait.

On the occasion of the owner's third annual

visit to his vineyard, since the tree had become of an age to demonstrate its usefulness, he stopped before it, and remarked to the vine-dresser: "These three years I have come seeking fruit on this tree, and finding none. Cut it down!"

He did not say it angrily. He was not loud before it. He did not shake his fist at the tree. He was calm and dispassionate. He had planted this tree with a fixed purpose in mind, expecting fruit. Twice he had been disappointed, but had said nothing. His period of patient waiting was now over. The trial had been sufficient. If the tree had proposed to bear fruit, it would have done so by this time. "Cut it down!" commanded the owner. "Why doth it cumber the ground?"

At this point the vine-dresser presumes to bargain for the life of the worthless tree. Perhaps it was partly his fault that there were no figs on the tree. He promised that if his lord would give the tree one more chance, "this year yet," he would prune it, and dig about it, and fertilize it. After that, if there was still no yield, he would indeed cut it down.

II

A great many people are living what they imagine to be ornamental lives. They are "quality folk," and fully aware of it. Had they been

born vines, they should have been content to take their humble place in the vineyard and bear grapes effectively and uncomplainingly, without envying a "Burbanked" neighbor on the right his larger fruit, or rejoicing over the friend on the left whose grapes were so sour they could set on edge the teeth of the fourth generation of consumers.

They insist that, had they been born vines, they would have accepted the lot of the vine without complaint. In that case they would never have tried to be beautiful, seeing how impossible that is for a grape-vine; they would have been content to lean upon the arbor for support and be thankful they had an arbor to lean on. But, as the matter stands, they do not happen to be vines. They are beautiful trees, standing on their own legs, lifting their heads to the air and sunshine, acquainted with the birds and the blue sky. Privileged folk!

Perhaps they had moments of misgiving when they were obliged, for the safeguarding of their own interests, to send a new root into the near vicinity of some struggling vine, thus drinking up all the moisture and nourishment on which this humble thing had been depending for its materials of existence; but, they reflected, that is the mysterious way of life. Some have, and some have not.

It is possible that if some one came to us ornamental people every morning with the in-

formation that it was high time we produced some fruit to justify our existence, we might view our own situation with more concern, though one may not be too sure of that. Jesus deals with this thought in his parable of a strictly ornamental soul, who, after a life of attire in purple and fine linen and sumptuous fare daily, had gone to his reckoning, where, finding reasons for wishing he had lived to better purpose, he requested that a messenger be sent to warn his five brothers against the manner in which they were spending their days. The spirit of Abraham, to whom the request came, remarked: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."

"Nay, Father Abraham," persisted the troubled spirit, "but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

Abraham was not to be dislodged from his position that the brothers' information was sufficient. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets," he said, "neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

It may be considered that for us the revelation of God's expectation of us is sufficient. We have had "Moses and the prophets," and one has risen from the dead to confirm his divine mandates.

Possibly, if a heavenly courier warned us personally every day that we should set about our task of bearing fruit, we would give some heed.

It is not sure. But nobody speaks to us directly, in a tone of authority. The voice of the Church is feeble, and is regarded with little more than an amused tolerance by the general public, bent on to-day's pleasure.

If, however, the indifferent soul is sufficiently potential to be capable of high service, the chances are strong that, rather than lose the beautiful tree, the vine-dresser will approach it with pruning-shears, denuding it of its foliage and leaving it stripped of everything that had made for its pride, digging about its roots and pouring in strong nourishment, for he hopes to save the life of his favorite tree.

We have quite outgrown the ancient idea of God as a "capricious" Deity, who intervened in the affairs of the individual, bringing him to task sometimes by way of severe chastisement. We have argued against that theory of Providence on the ground that God, as the great law-giver, must also keep His own laws. We have insisted that His intervention in human affairs would violate His own integrity, in that it would be done only through a violation of His orderly scheme of developing the race.

Yet we have seen how important it is for humanity to break certain established laws of life in order to execute more important laws. We do not feel that we have done violence to God when we change the course of a river, that it may render a larger service to the world. By

our faith and ingenuity mountains have been removed and cast into the sea, thereby connecting two oceans. And if it is possible for us to impose our wills upon nature, why should we deny to our Father the same right?

It is a very old-fashioned belief that influences our thought as we study this parable of the fruitless fig-tree. This is one of the unfinished stories of the Master. We do not learn whether the tree bore fruit or not. Perhaps it had been allowed to go too long as a mere ornament to the vineyard. But we may be assured that the vine-dresser did his best to put figs on that tree.

So all this pruning and digging, while not a very pleasant experience, was a distinct compliment to the fig-tree. The vine-dresser would not have gone to the bother if the tree had not been worth saving.

Now and again in the experience of some man who has never put back into civilization even a fraction of one per cent of that which he had taken out, living easily and carelessly in the midst of problems for which he might have helped find a remedy, he is suddenly brought up on a short tether and given a stern examination—enough to demonstrate to him that life, as most people have to live it, is a very real and serious institution!

We will do well not to attempt to read into everybody's misfortunes the outworking of a

pruning policy. Rather than have that happen, in our scheme of thinking, we would better disbelieve that such procedure ever occurs at all. When Jesus was asked, as the little company passed a blind man: "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus replied: "Neither."

But occasionally it seems as if some highly potential fig-tree is undergoing a pruning. If one realizes that one has been suddenly and unaccountably put through a period of serious stress, it might be worth looking into, anyhow.

However that may be, it is an assured fact that the best-lived lives are constantly eliminating the forces and influences which cramp and fetter them. They may not actually pluck out their eyes and cut off their hands, but they contrive to dispose of the tendencies in their lives which rob them of their mental peace, keep them awake nights, and threaten to make their old age wretched with blistering memories.

And the proper manner of proceeding to such elimination is by forcing the objectionable tendencies out through the introduction of a new ideal, new interests, new inspiration. Unless something greater and more powerful than these evil influences comes in, it is reasonably certain the evil influences will not stay out.

Jesus treats of this matter in his parable of the man who had violently expelled an evil spirit from his life. He did it by a stern decision

that he had had enough of that annoyance, and proposed to be forever done with it. Perhaps it was New Year's Day.

But he made no arrangements for filling that vacancy in his life with something better; so a little later, when the evil tendency (which Jesus personifies in this story as a rational being) decided that he could now safely move back in, he stealthily approached his erstwhile lodgings, noted that the room was empty, swept, and garnished, and entered, bringing with him "seven other spirits more wicked than himself."

It is to be doubted if a man can depend upon any "elimination" programme to purge his life of the things that menace his peace. He may exorcise his "evil spirits" and sweep and garnish his soul, but it is only the intrusion of a great ideal that can guarantee against their return.

A mother, coming unannounced to visit her son at college, found objectionable pictures on the walls of his room. She made no comment, but, upon returning home, expressed to him a beautifully framed reproduction of Hoffman's "The Boy Christ." And because his mother had sent the picture, the youth hung it on the wall. Presently a friend came in, noted the absence of the risqué pictures, and inquired why they were down, to which the student replied: "I couldn't have them up there beside *him!*"

Every conversion of a life of evil impulses and

sordid desires, through the acceptance of the Christian way of living, is but a variant of that story. The other things come down and out because we can't have them there beside *him*.

CHAPTER X

"YE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD"

THE confidence and courage with which Jesus accepted his cup of tragedy was predicated upon the willingness and capacity of his followers, then and thereafter, to the whole world, to carry the truth he had revealed.

Without doubt, the highest honor ever conferred upon humanity was implied by the calm serenity wherewith the Master was clothed as he issued the great commission authorizing his friends to go out and build a new civilization by preaching the gospel to every creature.

Not until we have studied Jesus' life, with this particular quest in mind, can we realize the extent of his faith in the valor of the individual. Sometimes he was frankly disappointed. More often he seemed delightfully satisfied. A centurion, with exquisite courtesy, reports that a member of his household is seriously ill; that he believed Jesus could effect a restoration; that it was quite unnecessary the Master should take the time and trouble to go to his house. "Speak!" begged the officer, "for I also am a

man in authority. I say to one 'Go!' and he goeth, and to another 'Come!' and he cometh. Say, in a word, and my servant shall be healed."

Such experiences must have been quite heartening to this divine interpreter, who realized how soon he would be required to delegate his stupendous task to men whose faith in him must serve as their chief qualification for the acceptance of that trust. There is, too, a certain peculiar significance in the reply of Jesus to this Roman soldier. If he had been thinking of his future apostolate mostly as a body of men in whose veins coursed the rich legacy of Abraham, it now seemed possible that the Gentile also possessed the mind and heart to appreciate a power-producing revelation of divinity. In the Master's rejoinder, "I have not found so great faith; no, not in Israel," it was as if he saluted the brave adventurers of alien blood who, in the oncoming centuries, would comprise the vanguard of his advancing kingdom of the soul.

Another incident of the sort must not be overlooked as we attempt to discover Jesus' attitude toward the consecrated faith of other than "his own" people. It was during a tour along the coast near Tyre and Sidon that a Canaanitish woman besought him in behalf of an invalid daughter. It should be remembered that the racial consciousness of the disciples was very strong. They were all Jews, and frankly contemptuous of aliens. It annoyed them that a

woman of Canaan, daughter of a despised race, should presume to ask favors.

For the purpose of teaching his company a special lesson in "internationalism," Jesus paid no attention to the woman's cries. But she, undaunted by his apparent indifference, continued to follow along, loudly begging for a hearing. The disciples advised: "Send her away; for she crieth after us." ("Us," indeed!)

Adopting the customary phraseology of the narrow-minded orthodox Jew, Jesus, affecting sternness, said to her: "I am not come but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But the woman's faith surmounted even this obstacle of the apparent racial selfishness of the man whom she still considered an interpreter of the divine. She continued to beg for help.

Again he put her faith to severe test in the statement: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." He was using one of the pet phrases of proud Judaism. Aliens were always "dogs."

"Truth, Lord," she replied; "yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

Perhaps he was unable to bear any more of this, even to teach his disciples an object lesson in generosity toward aliens. Evidently he had wished them to observe how strangely the conventional Jewish policy on this subject would sound, coming from his own lips. "O woman,"

he cried, "great is thy faith! Be it unto thee even as thou wilt!" It may be believed that internationalism made some gains that day.

Of course the immediate responsibility for the spread of the new gospel, upon Jesus' retirement from the earthly scene, would devolve upon the men whom he had ordained. They had not chosen him; he had chosen them. The new programme of life would presently be entirely in their custody. He would not expect anything from the centurion, in the coin of service: the Canaanitish woman would return to her home, and he would hear from her no more. But the quality of their faith indicated that his message was possessed of an appeal unrestricted to the peculiar environment in which its author lived.

In our study of the Master's mind we must not miss this really remarkable faith which he had in the eagerness of humanity to lay hold upon larger spiritual facts. And the adventures he made, predicated upon that faith, disclose the complete genuineness of his belief in mankind. We can afford to spend a little time reviewing a specimen case.

II

A delegation of learned men from Jerusalem had come to Capernaum by appointment, to confer with the Master relative to his teachings. There was no secret about this conference. Ap-

parently the whole north Galilean public knew of it, for thousands were interested. The house was packed to suffocation. Every doorway and window was blocked with anxious faces.

At length the conference was in session. The stern and serious rabbis are inquiring as to the source of Jesus' authority for his words and deeds. The inquisition was in a fair way to arrive, presently, at the chief point at issue—Jesus' right to pardon men's sins.

In the midst of the discussion the ceiling began to crumble, and showers of mortar and fragments of masonry drizzled down over the astounded company. They looked up, and beheld a bed coming through the roof. The bed bore a paralytic. The invalid's friends had gathered him up, bed and all, to bring him into Jesus' presence. Finding their way stopped because of the crowd, these men, with the audacity usually found in combination with a vital faith, had hauled their burden to the housetop, chopped through the flat roof, and were now lowering their stricken friend into the conference-room.

The Master did not seem to regard their act as an unwarrantable intrusion. He may have welcomed it as a relief from the tiresome questions of these pedants who had come hoping to entangle him and belittle him. Immediately he addressed the sick man: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Without doubt, this had been the

motion before the house when the roof came in. But how could he forgive sins? Easy enough to say it, of course. Anybody could say it; but with what authority? That was the question. The answer to their unspoken objection came quickly. Jesus faced them and said: "That ye may know that the son of man hath authority to forgive sins, I say unto thee" (turning to the paralytic), "arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."

One wonders what will be the outcome of all this, if the paralytic fails to get up! Somebody says: "But that is assured. Jesus has restored him. He must get up!" Oh, no; not necessarily. Jesus has told him to arise; but he may not do so for any one of several reasons. He may think he is not able. He has come to consider himself entirely out of commission physically. Or he may be so overcome by the excitement that he will be too embarrassed and confused to risk making a spectacle of himself before this gaping crowd. Or, sensing the dispute, he may not care to brook the theologians' wrath by becoming arbiter of a case which they must lose, if he obeys.

But here is a moment fraught with very serious consequences. The Master has given this sick man a new lease on life. He is no longer paralyzed. He may now get up and go his way, But if, for any reason whatsoever, he does not get up and go his way, Jesus will be denounced as a pretender. So; for this one little moment

the Master was willing to make the adventure of resting his case with the man on the cot. If he gets up, shoulders his bed, and starts home, Jesus has authority to forgive sins. If he fails to get up—either because he is too timid or too stupid or too faithless—Jesus does not have the authority he claims.

There is a sense in which the divine authority of our Lord is perpetually referred, for practical verification, to the individuals whose lives have been transformed by way of the benefits accruing to them through the power of Christianity. In every generation persons who have become beneficiaries of this rehabilitating energy are test cases, whether they relish the distinction or not. When told to arise and do his will, there is a great deal more involved in the admonition than appears on the surface. A refusal to obey is equivalent to placing weapons in the hands of the forces which would find themselves advantaged, in material gains, by a frustration of the truth that Jesus taught.

To-day large groups of people profess that their lives have been made over by the transforming power of Jesus' teachings. Once having made such a declaration, it is as if the self-confessedly redeemed had been wheeled into a clinic to be examined by a board of physicians avowedly unfriendly to the healer who claims to possess the power to mend lives. Say the critics to the patient: "Feel any stronger?"

"Yes." "Think you could walk?" "Assuredly!" "Why don't you?"

At this charge the patient rises on one elbow and remarks, with some warmth: "Jesus has healed me, I tell you. He has wonderful power! He is the great physician! You should concede him that title." But the critics only smile and say: "Let us see you move your hand. No, not that one. We know you are sound on that side —common honesty, frugality, thrift, and all the rest of that category of staple virtues. Move the other hand—the paralyzed hand! We want to know whether you would be able to lift a cup of cold water to a stranger's lips. Move your foot! We would like to see whether you could walk on an errand of mercy!"

"Then you are scoffers and infidels?" demands the patient.

"Perhaps," reply the doctors. "We are wondering about that ourselves. But now that your great physician has told you to arise, if you do not he may proclaim his power and you may profess your cure, but we will not believe. In other words, and bluntly, if you don't arise, you can't arise!"

With all the faults and failures of the people who have attempted to demonstrate the power of Christ, it is in justification of his faith in humanity's willingness to prove his case that Christian civilization is the most important fact in the world to-day.

One of the most touching episodes in the story of Jesus' trial before Pilate occurs when the prisoner, having been invited into the procurator's office for a private conference, waives his opportunity to plead his own cause because he is more concerned about his judge's personal attitude toward him.

We do not linger to rehearse the event, although it well deserves all the attention the Christian can put upon it. To lend one's imagination to this event it is easy to construct a unique and dramatic scene. Jesus has been asked inside. The brawling mob, which would have considered it defilement to cross the threshold, was left behind. The centurion, with much rattling of armor, had directed the way for the Galilean, and had closed the door from without. The two young men faced each other. Each was profoundly interested in the other, for they had never met before. They were, each in his own peculiar sphere, the most important figures in the public eye of Jerusalem that day.

For some moments neither moved nor spoke. The Roman was ruddy of face and garishly attired. He was well fed and wore an air of prosperity. The Galilean was pale, fatigued, unkempt, and showing signs of the rough treatment he had experienced at the hands of the mob.

So this was the king! It may be imagined that for a moment Pilate's lip curled in contempt. He may have been in the very act of

summoning the soldier to lead the prisoner forth again. But something in the Master's eyes moved him to a sudden interest. With considerable deference, he inquired: "Art thou a king?"

Here is the Galilean's chance to explain to Pontius Pilate the real facts about his ministry. He has an opportunity to recite the fundamentals of the Christian creed, to wit: If you would live nobly, you must love deeply. If you would be great, you must serve. If you would be forgiven your mistakes, you must forgive others their mistakes. It is only the life of the soul that matters; keep your soul alive.

But, strangely enough, Jesus spends this critical moment, given him for self-defense, in attempting to find out how Pilate, himself, felt about this matter of "kingship." "Sayest thou this of thyself," inquired the Master, "or did others tell it thee?"

Jesus had so much faith in humanity's ability to see the reasonableness of his gospel that he wondered if, perhaps, this Roman procurator might be persuaded to understand. And if, in such unlikely quarters, the Man of Galilee sought human faith in the new gospel, it is not difficult to understand how he would say, earnestly and sincerely, to his ordained disciples: "Ye are the light of the world."

III

Sometimes the question has been raised by thoughtful people why Jesus, having said of himself, "I am the light of the world," would apply the same phrase to his messengers. After reflection one decides that this was entirely logical. If they were now to become the custodians of this energy they were, in very truth, "the light of the world."

To make doubly sure that they realized the importance of their commission, he added: "Ye are the salt of the earth." Nobody to-day can catch the full significance of that statement unless he knows the story of salt. This indispensable commodity was scarce and precious in Jesus' day. Practically all the salt was brought, at the expense of long journeys, from certain natural deposits. It was so difficult to find that at one time the Roman soldiers were paid in little disks of salt. Indeed, our word "salary" is thus derived from the Latin *salus*. Many have thought that Rome's chief, if not the only, reason for being interested in Palestine was due to the old caravan route from Joppa to Engedi, on the Dead Sea, where salt was to be had in abundance. But for Rome's desire to control that caravan trail, it is unlikely the Jews would have become tributary to the Cæsars.

However that may be, salt was precious.

Jesus said to these men who were shortly to become responsible for the spread of his truth: "Ye are the salt of the earth." And then, he added: "But if the salt lose its saltness, wherewith shall it be salted? It is henceforth good for nothing." There was only one thing that salt could ever be—and that was salt. Extremely valuable so long as it remained salt. But when it had lost its saltness, it was done. After the chloride of sodium has all been washed out of salt, what remains is a liability rather than an asset.

The same type of caution attends the statement: "Ye are the light of the world." "Men do not light a candle," observed the Master, "and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick." Some illuminations are so small they have been effectually concealed behind a silver dollar. "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works."

Many men of Jerusalem could be found who would be almost sure to misinterpret these words. The customary method of letting one's light shine was thoroughly objectionable to Jesus. Some of the most important functions of the Christian's life were to be exercised in strictest secrecy. There was, for example, the privilege of prayer. The Pharisee prayed openly on the street, loudly and lengthily, in the hope and belief that he would be observed. He was not

particularly concerned about encouraging others to do the like. It was not for the purpose of making prayer popular that the Pharisee made a public exhibition of his supplications. He wished other people to note that here came a man of great piety.

Jesus grows very stern as he deals with the problems involved in the attempt of small-calibred souls to use their religion for purposes of self-advertisement. It is with extreme difficulty that we can understand an age or country where the most prominent men in public life moved majestically along the street, eyes aloft, finger-tip to finger-tip, audibly reciting the sonorous psalms of praise. And we are inclined to wonder if the picture was not overdrawn which features the Pharisee in that incident which begins: "Two men went up into the temple to pray." For, you will remember, this man prayed thus with himself: "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men." But if we will strip the scene of its local color, it is not so difficult to observe this thanks-that-I-am-not-as-other-men prayer cropping out even in our own devotions.

The ideal prayer, according to Jesus, was a strictly private affair. The devotee should closet himself in the sanctuary of his own room, shut the door, and pray in secret. His Father, hearing him in secret, would reward him openly. Jesus, having become persuaded that men were not to be divinely dealt with in groups, but as

individuals, became equally sure that humanity's approach to God must be made by men as individuals. They were not to supplicate as committees or organizations, but as souls.

The implications of this theme to-day are of considerable importance. Civilization has depended so much upon socialization, that it is easy for the individual to lose sight of himself. He comes to disregard the significance of any relationship beyond the corporate groupings of society. He encounters the danger of becoming incapable of any large degree of mental or moral independence.

There is a mental disease known to psychotherapy as "agoraphobia"—the fear of open spaces. The victim of this obsession is serene, poised, and contented of mind in a crowd. So long as he is under the shadow of tall buildings, under a roof, in a train or a boat, or otherwise rubbing elbows with humans, he is normal. Let him be isolated from the pack for a moment, and he goes at once into a state of nervous stampede. He belongs to the pack and must stay in the pack. He has an abnormal development of the sense of tribal dependence.

Many people are afflicted with this malady who have never explained their case to a neurologist. Agoraphobia is so common a disorder that not many persons are able to endure their own society for any considerable length of time without finding their minds either so turbulent,

so unaccountably depressed, or so stupidly uninteresting that almost any human association seems preferable to their own.

Curiously enough, along with this agoraphobia, which dreads detachment from the crowd, comes an unfathomable fear of the crowd. The mind that is unable to deal with itself alone is beset by fear of the very pack indispensable to its existence. "What will they say?" is the uppermost query in the mind of this unfortunate, because, since he dares not be alone, he is under necessity to keep in the good graces of the crowd. He is obliged to be in it and of it at all times. He cannot risk its displeasure or abandonment of him. He must exercise the utmost vigilance to avoid doing or saying anything that might call attention to some distinction or difference of mind, mood, or temper existing in his own case. His dread of being caught out alone with an idea, an impulse, a motive, not commonly shared by the mob, requires him to keep his own personality well under cover.

It may be presumed that he has, or once had, a candle. Perhaps it was expected of him that he was to become, in his own way, and to the best of his ability, a light to the world. But his light has long since been eclipsed.

Jesus offers practical counsel to this man concerning the processes by which he may recover his lost individuality. Let him deal with himself alone at stated times. Let him enter into his

closet and, when he has shut the door, pray to his Father in secret. The supreme value of this counsel is realized only at the point of our understanding that the greatest tests and most critical experiences of life are events with which the individual, himself, must deal unaided by any fellow-mortal. One's last earthly experience is bound to be the loneliest of them all. It will be important in that moment to have had previous acquaintance—not as a member of a committee but as a personal friend—with the spirit of Him to whom we go, at length, alone.

In the same spirit, Jesus has a word to say about the processes of charity. Almsgiving, properly administered, should be so quietly performed that the donor's own left hand would not be aware what the right hand had been doing. There is a peculiar psychology involved here, which baffles explanation. Do your good deed and keep it a secret. You will achieve a great deal of satisfaction. Tell somebody you did it, and you divide your joy in half. Tell a dozen, and the joy is all gone. Whoever wishes to elucidate this mystery is welcome to the materials. One simply knows that it is true.

Kindhearted Mr. Jones has met his old college chum on the street. The old college chum has been in great misfortune. He has been ill and poor and is now out of work. Moreover, he is having trouble making business connections. Perhaps it is because he is shabby, shaggy, and

discouraged. Jones goes down into his pocket and produces a roll of banknotes. He instructs his needy friend to buy new clothes, visit a barber, secure a comfortable room and sleep for fifteen hours, eat a few square meals, and then come around to the office. Together they would see what could be done about a new position for him.

All day Jones goes about in a sort of golden mist. Never had he done anything in his life that gave him this particular kind of spiritual satisfaction. In the evening his closest friend and neighbor drops in for a call. Jones decides to share his little confidence. He thinks he can report it in such a manner that the emphasis will rest upon the fact that he had happened to meet his old chum, in his hour of dire emergency —strange coincidence, and all that. So Jones tells the story; and even while he is telling it, he feels the ecstatic joy of the thing gradually oozing out! Why? Who knows? But it is true. One can depend upon whatever Jesus said about these practical considerations. He was an astute and infallible psychologist.

Doubtless Jesus would rejoice in the story, recently told, of two men in a Western city, rival manufacturers of the same product. So sharp was their competition that their personal relations became badly strained. For years they had merely bowed as they met. Each felt that the other was his enemy. One of these factories

was located near the bank of a large river. The river swelled to a devastating flood one night, and the factory was swept away. Next morning the ruined man's competitor heard of his rival's misfortune, and hurried to the scene of the disaster, where he found his enemy sitting upon a heap of rubbish, with his face in his hands. Glancing up when saluted, the dejected man recognized his competitor, and said: "Well, you can have it all your own way now! Everything I had is gone!"

"So I see," responded the other. "I came to tell you that you are welcome to use my plant to fill your present orders while you are rebuilding. You may pay me whatever that is worth to you when you are on your feet again. You may have the use of my name on your paper at the bank. And if there is anything else I can do for you, in this time of your misfortune, call on me."

Doubtless Jesus would rejoice in that story, but he would think it a much better story if only he and two others knew it. That must have been a great day for this man who came to the relief of his erstwhile enemy. It must have been a wonderful experience—until he told it. One wishes—he was such a very fine fellow—that he had kept it to himself. It would have become a great comfort to him in his old age.

In Jesus' time men fasted. Sometimes the self-abnegation was practised more or less perfunctorily. In many cases it was done sys-

tematically and with great thoroughness—so thoroughly, indeed, that the celebrant grew thin, pale, and haggard. You could tell how good a man was by his face. There were no rosy and dimpled saints. A drawn, colorless skin stretched over obtrusive cheek-bones, was a sign of piety. That being the case, it had become quite customary for men to distort their faces into lugubrious masks of misery, in the hope of receiving the attention due the righteous.

The Master had nothing to say against fasting. But he told his disciples that if they proposed to fast they should anoint their heads, wash their faces, and "appear not to fast," if they hoped to derive any spiritual benefit from the exercise.

Now and then one still sees some sour-visaged saint who, if he really has come into the abiding joy which is one of the delightful perquisites of a consecrated life, appears to have his inner happiness under a most excellent control. But Christianity has made some splendid gains at this point. The cases of modern Christians who speak in requial tones, with the corners of their mouths drawn down, are so infrequently encountered that one wishes certain other phases of the gospel had come to be understood as well and practised as widely as this admonition: "Appear not unto men to fast."

At this point it is quite worth while to note the additional implications of Jesus' counsel to

men that they should not attempt to appear otherwise than as they are. Spiritual development would work startling transformations upon men's lives; but not "by taking thought" could one add a cubit to one's physical stature.

The pitiful endeavor of many people to submerge their own individuality and become but members of a social organism rather than spiritual units—each capable of living an independent life—has led them to resort to all manner of devices to destroy their identities. No longer do they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast; for fasting is not the issue of the day. But, in so far as they can, these misguided people make themselves over into the semblance of something other than they are. This is achieved largely through imitation.

If a man examine himself pitilessly, he may discover that a larger territory of his life than he has supposed is a mere mosaic made up of the odds and ends of other people's "personalities," deftly pieced together to serve his own purposes. He may also discover, with some chagrin—if not terror—that he has practised a definite programme of being something else than he is until it is quite difficult for him to express his own personality at all. The "myself" seems to be irretrievably lost.

Disappointed with their failure to capitalize their own talents quickly, many people have been led to make curious experiments with their

physiognomy. They seem bent upon mending their faces, lured by the fatuous hope of expressing more "personality" by the alteration of their physical appearance, when they ought to know that every time they make yet another change of this sort, they only damage their identity by that much!

Jesus wants his light-bearers to learn to deal with themselves alone. The illumination they give forth will be a reflected light, but it must be reflected directly! It is to proceed without interference from the Source, and be reflected without interference from the individual. Hence the high necessity of the light-bearer's immediate contacts with his Father. Hence, also, the importance of his living a life of sufficient self-containment that he may be sure of that personal relationship between himself and his spiritual Author. To the fullest realization of that bond, it is imperative that he not only derive his chief help "in secret," but give certain expressions of his own spiritual power by processes known only to himself and his God. If, in the exercise of his faith and service, he experiences sorrows, losses, and disappointments, let him keep his own counsel and show a smiling face.

IV

Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon Jesus' belief in and expectation of the individual

as a bearer of the light. We have been in grave danger of missing the importance of this admonition in these days, when almost every human activity is accomplished by mass-movements to which the individual is related somewhat as a blade of grass is related to a meadow.

The fact is not without significance that no two of us are alike. There has never been a person like you in the world before, and there will not be another. Each human personality, instinctively sensing this peculiarity within himself, and noting it in others, is passionately eager to discover what it is that others possess of which he is in ignorance. Our Father has projected Himself into our lives in such a manner that no two of us have received exactly the same spiritual bequest; and each individual is concerned to know what it is that others have received which he, himself, does not own or know. This may be said to be the secret of all human relationships—the striving of each to see the inner light possessed by the others.

But you will not freely reveal to me the peculiar radiance which is your unique heritage, unless I reciprocate the favor by disclosing to you the light that has been vouchsafed to me. Men who seem unable to win and retain close friendships fail at the point of their unwillingness to reveal the light projected into their souls. Usually the reason is that they have so cluttered their own personalities with the imitated graces

and virtues of their contemporaries that they have no way of reflecting any other than the dim borrowed lights of the persons they have sought to pattern.

The practical nature of this counsel applies with full force to the attempted achievement of success in any of life's engagements. The man who becomes a noted actor is he who expresses himself, and the peculiar mental and spiritual gifts that are his, with the utmost of "naturalness." The writer who can make other people see exactly what are his own personal reactions to the experiences and phenomena of life can be depended upon to secure readers. Whoever, without artifice or restraint, reveals himself to his friends, needs never lack friends.

But all this light-bearing is predicated upon the ability of the individual to clear the way between himself and the Source of his light. Whatever stands between him and his God must be disposed of. The slightest remorse over an injustice done a fellow-human, which one has made no effort to repair, will make the human-divine contact very difficult. Jesus deals with this situation in this statement: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Frequent blunders, due to our human frailty,

will require us to plead for a restoration to the confidence of an offended Father; nor may we hope for a reopening of the spiritual path to Him, through the consciousness of His pardon, until we have also reopened the impeded ways between ourselves and our fellows. In other words, I may not have more light projected into me until I have cleared the way for the reflection of that light. It is not a light that I may or can absorb! Only as I reflect it may I receive it! To reopen the way to the Source, therefore, when by reason of neglect or wilfulness it has been closed, it becomes necessary for me to clear the obstacles which prevent me from reflecting light. "If ye forgive men their trespasses," said Jesus, in dealing with this problem, "your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

What honest men most desire is more light. Obviously there is but one Source from which it proceeds. Nothing is more clearly demonstrated than the fact that God is willing to disclose more light in exact proportion to men's ability to make use of it. Now and again He seems to project into certain chosen souls brighter rays than had previously been revealed. It is customary for the contemporaries of these privileged light-bearers to doubt the validity or use of these new rays. Forever, we are emulating the wisdom and fidelity of men who, in former

times, served as light-bearers to their kind. We remember that they were bitterly persecuted by a misunderstanding public. Too rarely does it occur to us that the despised and defamed "eccentric" or "heretic" of the hour may eventually be recognized—when it is quite too late to do him honor—as a messenger bearing a new fact to the world. The situation could not be better stated than in Jesus' remark: "Ye build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the sepulchres of the righteous, saying: 'If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'"

The bequest of heavenly light is a legacy still proceeding to the sons of men. In that majestic prayer which Jesus offered on the eve of his tragedy, after having begged that their courage and faith might be increased who were to become his immediate successors in the task of teaching the world his gospel, he considered the unborn torch-bearers of the future. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. I will that they, also . . . may behold the glory which thou hast given me."

It is a stirring thought that Jesus offered a prayer for you and me; that he considered the bearers of the torch who, in ages to come, would be as necessary to the continuity of his kingdom as were Peter, James, and John.

It is not only a stirring thought but a staggering responsibility. Once a man becomes conscious of that delegated trust, he lives a haunted life; and there will be no further rest for him until he accepts and fulfils his commission. "Ye have not chosen me," said Jesus. "I have chosen you!" And every man who has been thus honored is aware of his high office. He shall have no peace of mind or satisfaction of heart unless he consents to carry on.

I think I see some carmine-stained footprints on the path that we must tread who have become conscious of our appointment as torch-bearers in our own generation. I think I hear the Master saying to us, as he said to his colleagues: "Whoever would be great among you must minister; and whoever would be the greatest must be servant of all." There may be some other way for some other people, but there can never be any other way for us.

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